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**An exploration of the knowledge women in Sunderland have of help-seeking
in response to domestic violence**

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the award of PhD

IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

BY

Angela Wilcock

University of Sunderland

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my grandson Noah Wilcock who was born on the 25th January 2014 in the midst of the write-up.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. I authorise the University of Sunderland to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for scholarly research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the participants who completed the on-line survey. I would also like to thank sincerely the women who gave up their time to participate in the interviews.

Sincere thanks to my Director of Studies, Professor Catherine Donovan and Co Supervisor Dr Sheila Quaid. Without their expertise, guidance, support and belief in my work I would not have embarked on or completed this journey. I have the greatest respect for you both.

A debt of gratitude is owed to my sons Antony and Bryce Wilcock who believed in me and encouraged me to embark on this journey. Without their support along with that of my future daughter-in-law, Gemma, this journey would have been impossible.

Finally, I am indebted to my partner Vince who has provided me with the time and space both practically and emotionally to complete this thesis. You have supported me unreservedly and for that I will be eternally grateful.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the level of awareness women in Sunderland have of help-seeking intervention and what is known about the agencies that respond to domestic violence, regardless of personal experiences. It examines the extent of how understandings of domestic violence impact on potential help-seeking and the barriers that contribute to the difficulty of help-seeking. Previous research has largely focussed on survivors of domestic violence who have had contact with formal agencies.

Feminist theory informed this thesis and standpoint epistemology was used as a framework for the procedures that were applied in the research. A mixed method approach was utilised in the form of an on-line survey, which recruited participants, and informed the interview schedule in the qualitative phase. The qualitative phase included 20 semi-structured interviews with women of varied ages, which was analysed using thematic analysis. Through reflexive practice of the fieldwork process there emerged, as a result of consciousness raising, what I have coined, an 'ontological transition'.

Significantly, ontological transitions vary between respondent pending upon their knowledge and/or personal experiences of domestic violence. However, crucially the analysis of the respondent interviews highlights that one characteristic is the impact of shame. It was found that the experience of shame is not confined to a

particular social positioning or related to faith or ethnicity. Through talking about their experiences of shame respondents were able to consider a different relationship. Some respondents were able to reject shame as they recognised that their experience is not personal but a collective of experiences in some way. This realisation and their transformation through taking part in the interview is part of the ontological transition and will be discussed further in the body of the thesis.

Importantly, this thesis illustrates the significant difference in knowledge of 3 identified respondent group types, which emerged during analysis of the qualitative data. Through reflection on the written documents and thematic maps it enabled the development and management of the key themes and new ideas (appendix 18). It was through this process that a relationship between experiences of domestic violence, and knowledge emerged as the data was refined. This was the recognition of 3 identified groups of knowledge about domestic violence, which, after further analysis, were named the experiential, institutional and notional groups (see appendix 18). The groups are informed through their social, personal or professional experiences, and this shapes their potential for future help-seeking (chapters four and five). This gives the opportunity to offer an understanding of how domestic violence and help-seeking are understood by women regardless of their experience of domestic violence.

Current theoretical and policy explanations of domestic violence and help-seeking are predominantly based on the collective experiences of survivors. They do not take into account the understandings and experiences of other women regardless of

their experiences of domestic violence and, how this shapes their potential for help-seeking. I argue help-seeking is complex and the decision to seek help is a consequence that starts with recognising that what is being experienced is domestic violence. Additionally, I argue that the help-seeking is hampered through non-recognition of behaviour as domestic violence and ideologies of gendered roles and expectations, male entitlement, ownership, love and acts of altruism by women that normalise and minimise abusive behaviours in the heterosexual relationship.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The acceptance of domestic violence as a social problem has inspired many prevention strategies and initiatives, thus implying much violence within the home can or could be prevented (Harne & Radford, 2008). New Labour (1997 – 2010) had been in power for just over a decade when this thesis commenced and the multi-agency framework was well established nationally at local levels. The co-ordinated response was rolled out by local authorities bringing together formal agencies that supported women experiencing domestic violence. This multi-agency approach that had been born through feminist activism recognised that one agency could not deal with the complex needs of survivors (Hague, 1997). New Labour based its policy and practice reforms on prevention, protection and support through the co-ordinated approach, with the emphasis on ‘working to stop it happening in the first place’ (Home Office, 2003:4). Nevertheless, to stop it happening, there has to be a consensus in society of what domestic violence is and knowledge about help-seeking intervention.

Domestic violence is predominantly perpetrated by men against women, more so when there is a pattern of repeated violence; it includes rape or sexual assault or results in injury or death (Women’s Aid, 2011). Nevertheless, men can experience domestic violence however, the patterns of abuse perpetrated by women against men differ to that of male violence against women (Alifanoviené et al, 2013). Indeed,

research shows that women, who are acknowledged as weaker than men, 'more often use emotional or economic violence against their partners' (Alifanoviené et al, 2013:38). However, there is very little research identifying the experiences of heterosexual male survivors but it is beginning to increase internationally both through services such as, MenKind that responds to male violence, and academic attention. Therefore, this thesis due to its focus and limitations is based only on the knowledge of women in Sunderland.

Johnson (1995) amongst others notes feminist analyses of violence against women rely heavily upon the data of survivors, more so from the women who have had contact with support agencies. Whilst there is a comprehensive body of research in response to domestic violence, there appears a lack of research with a particular focus on women, regardless of their experience of domestic violence, and the knowledge they have about help-seeking intervention. Therefore, this research is:

An exploration of the knowledge women in Sunderland have of help-seeking in response to domestic violence.

This will be achieved through exploring: what was known about help-seeking in response to domestic violence, what formal and informal networks would be utilised if necessary, and what women in Sunderland knew about the local services available to them in response to domestic violence (see section 3.1). The aims of the research and the choice of the City of Sunderland as the site for this study will be discussed more in-depth in chapter three.

The thesis is informed through feminist theory (see chapter two). Feminist research focuses on the oppression and exploitation of women within the family and society, which positions men's violence within the structures of power, control and patriarchy (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Hague and Malos, 2005; Johnson, 1995). Feminist standpoint is to provide the framework and the procedures, for gathering knowledge about women in this thesis. Harding (2004) amongst others argues, it is through feminist standpoint that the lives and experiences of women provide the basis for the production of knowledge.

Interest for this thesis arose as a result of my own previous academic studies, as well as personal and professional experiences. Closer examination of academic, governmental, statutory and voluntary agency research revealed that women in society who have not already identified or been identified as victims/survivors of domestic violence had been largely excluded from research. What was also apparent was little research, if any, had focussed on the level of awareness women in society might have of domestic violence, and both formal and informal support networks that respond to this heinous phenomenon. Indeed, Mooney (2000:24) suggested that 'more detailed and in-depth research, particularly on the general population' is needed in response to domestic violence.

It is apparent within existing research that there is a significant under reporting of domestic violence cases and the true extent of incidence is unknown (Hague and Malos, 2005; Mooney, 2000), with much abuse remaining hidden within the private sphere. It is also illustrated that multi-agency initiatives only reach a small proportion

of survivors as help-seeking is predominantly through informal networks (Liang et al, 2005; Moe, 2007; Postmus et al, 2009; Wilcox, 2006). However, the informal route has received minimal attention compared to that of formal interventions. This presented a gap in the literature that needed exploring in an attempt to understand more fully why women do not seek help in response to domestic violence, and if understandings of domestic violence prevent help-seeking.

Towards the end of writing this thesis the Coalition Government consulted on the definition of domestic violence, and as a result, widened the definition in March 2013 (Home Office, 2013) (see section 7.5). The Home office definition now includes coercion and control and has extended the age to include all 16-17 year olds (see section 7.5). However, this was not explored in this thesis as the field work was completed and write-up had commenced prior to the widening of the definition. Therefore the definition used in this thesis was that of the Northumbria Police Force (see appendix 1), which was active at that time.

What was significant to this thesis was the emergence of 3 respondent group types that were identified during analysis of the qualitative data (see chapter three). The 3 respondent groups reflect different knowledge about domestic violence and help-seeking, which have been named as the experiential, institutional and notional groups (see appendix 2). Having identified these groups the analysis became more reflective of their experience (or not) of domestic violence. Importantly, this raised the point that how domestic violence is understood by women ultimately impacts on potential help-seeking. The identified groups have not been recognised in any other

research into domestic violence and provide a key factor in making sense of what is known about help-seeking, and how it is understood. This thesis brings to the fore how the experiential, institutional and notional groups define and understand domestic violence, similarly, but also at times, dramatically differently.

Firstly, chapter two positions the research within the existing literature, and provides a framework to the discussion of women's knowledge about help-seeking in response to domestic violence. This will include a review of the literature outlining the; feminist framework that has informed this work, context of domestic violence, and a review of New Labour's policy and practice responses to domestic violence. There will be a review of the definition of domestic violence both from a feminist and governmental approach. Understandings of emotional abuse that include both love and acts of altruism, as well as sexual and financial abuse that can be normalised and hidden within heterosexual relationships, is discussed. The barriers that prevent the naming of behaviours as domestic violence, and the help-seeking literature about both informal and formal intervention are included.

Chapter three will focus on the methodological framework and procedures, which are applied to gathering knowledge in this thesis. It seeks to set out how, in practice, the research was approached and how the evidence was assessed. The identification and aims of the project are discussed including the process of ethical consideration. There is a discussion of feminist standpoint that has influenced and shaped this work (see Harding, 2004; Hartsock, 1998, Hughes, 2003), included is the recognition of a new conceptual framework, which occurred through

consciousness-raising (see Giddens, 1987; Hughes, 2002; Stanley and Wise, 1983, 1993, Wheeler-Brooks, 2009), and this is what I have termed an 'ontological transition' (see section 3.4). Following this there will be a discussion of; the mixed method approach that is utilised, the use of a research journal, the inclusion of a statutory definition and problems encountered.

The research design of the quantitative phase is discussed and this section sets out and explains the processes, it will include the sample, questionnaire design, the pilot study, the data management and analysis using SPSS, and an outline of the findings. Lastly, there is a discussion explaining the processes of the qualitative phase, which includes the; specificity of the sample, interview schedule, the pilot study and the interview design and processes. Data management through the use of thematic analysis and NVivo as a means of storing and organising the data in the latter stages, and the significance of the research will be discussed. This also includes a discussion of the fieldwork process which includes positionality, reflexivity and the emotional engagement, which occurred in the field.

Chapter four brings to the fore the knowledge of the 3 respondent groups that highlight not only social, personal and professional experiences, but cultural and gendered norms, which together produce an apparent acceptance of unacceptable behaviours within some heterosexual relationships. Common themes are evident in each respondent group, which link understandings about certain behaviours but, also highlights how the groups define and understand domestic violence slightly, and, at times, dramatically differently, depending on their knowledge. However,

while the understandings and knowledge of definition varied between the 3 groups, they all understood domestic violence to involve physical violence.

Chapter five highlights the barriers that were identified in the narrative of the 3 respondent groups, which presents the opportunity to silence experiences of abusive behaviours. This then ultimately prevents a route to potential help-seeking. The barriers brought to the fore through the narrative of the 3 groups present: fear, which increases feelings of emotional distress by women; the impact of love (Donovan and Hester, 2010, Fraser, 2003; Lloyd and Emery, 2000), which blurs the boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the intimate relationship; male entitlement and ownership (MacKinnon, 2004; Stark, 2007, 2012; Weiss, 2009), which is grounded in gendered expectations of heterosexuality; and a cultural acceptance reflecting a normalisation of domestic violence within heterosexual relationships. It was also found that gendered expectations support male entitlement to sexual gratification and issues of ownership through coercive control (see Stark, 2007, 2012; Weiss, 2009), within intimate heterosexual relationships. The findings also suggest a continuum of male entitlement that is found in financial arrangements and decision making in relation to joint resources. There is also a discussion of the ideologies of motherhood, shame and self-blame, all of which have presented barriers to help-seeking intervention in response to domestic violence.

Chapter six discusses the knowledge base of help-seeking through the knowledge of the notional, institutional and experiential groups. Both routes to informal and

formal support were explored in the fieldwork. One common theme that emerged between the 3 respondent groups is the informal network being the preferred path to help-seeking (see also the England and Wales Survey). However, there is a significant difference between their knowledge about formal networks. The narrative of the experiential group highlights a complexity in the stages of help-seeking, which the notional and institutional groups do not show. The institutional group are more informed about existing services responding to domestic violence in the city, which is influenced through their professional roles. The notional group present little knowledge about formal help-seeking intervention.

Lastly, chapter seven gives an overview of the findings, bringing to the fore claims and observations identified in this thesis. The analysis raises questions about the dissemination of information raising awareness both about what domestic violence is and help-seeking intervention. The discussion presents my contributions to knowledge through the 3 identified respondent groups and 'ontological transition'. The following two sections discuss two main barriers that are identified during the analysis: non-recognition and the normalisation and minimisation of domestic violence, which prevent access to help-seeking (see chapters four and five). This thesis brings to the fore a difference in the knowledge of the 3 groups that, at times, is significantly different, depending on their social, personal or professional positioning. Thereafter, there is a discussion of; implications for this research in terms of current Government policies and practice, the method used, limitations of this research, suggestions for further research and lastly, concluding observations.

As set out above the following chapter positions my research within the existing literature, and provides a framework through the knowledge survivors have about help-seeking intervention in response to domestic violence.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter positions my research within the existing literature and provides a theoretical framework for a discussion of women's knowledge about help-seeking in response to domestic violence. The review of the literature will give a brief outline of the; feminist theoretical framework, context of domestic violence including a review of New Labour's responses to domestic violence. The literature about the help-seeking behaviour of survivors including both informal and formal networks will be explored. The definition of domestic violence is discussed both from a feminist and governmental approach in an attempt to understand the impact this has on help-seeking. There will be an attention to understandings of emotional abuse including understandings of love and acts of altruism, as well as sexual and financial abuse, which is normalised and hidden within some heterosexual relationships. A discussion of privacy in the home that presents the opportunity to silence and hide domestic violence will be reviewed.

2.1 Theoretical Overview

Feminism has a historical discourse internationally, which is encompassed in women's movements, which works tirelessly to improve the lives of women (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Humm, 1992). The literature demonstrates that feminist theory is

dedicated to analysing the position of women, in an attempt to offer an understanding and make sense of what defines, and shapes women's lives, in order to improve it (Byron, 2003; Dobash and Dobash, 1976; 1992; 2000; Hague and Malos, 2005; Harne and Radford, 2008; Hughes, 2002; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). Traditionally feminist theoretical emphasis on violence against women has been on historical traditions of patriarchy and the family (Johnson, 1995). Theoretical understandings predominantly focussed on patriarchal power and control, which influenced the oppression and subordination of women, bringing to the fore male power in its crudest and most aggressive form (Bryson, 2003).

Until recently feminist theoretical understandings of gender focused on women (Byron, 2003). However, understandings of contemporary masculinity and femininity, and the structures within society that make it hard for women to leave violent relationships (Byron, 2003; Delphy, 1984; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Johnson, 1995, 2008) are now explored. More recently feminist theory has brought to the fore that domestic violence is not just a heterosexual phenomenon, but is active within same sex relationships, regardless of sexuality (see Donovan and Hester, 2006).

However, it was not until the late twentieth century that feminism referred more generally to theories of patriarchal control, which brought about feminist struggles in bringing political attention to the oppression of women (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Feminist theory highlighted and brought to the fore sexuality as a major factor of male domination over women, with heterosexuality organising many

aspects of gender relations (see Humm, 1995; MacKinnon, 2004; Walby, 1992). Feminist theory offers an understanding of violence against women, and Letherby (2003:44) argues 'experience should be the starting point for any knowledge production', in an attempt to understand, and theorise the 'social world from the perspective of women'.

Indeed, Skeggs (1997) notes that experience is central to feminist theory, and personal politics commences as soon as women start talking to each other, and make sense of their experiences as women. This is identified by Stanley and Wise (1983, 1993) as consciousness-raising and it was through experience and feminist consciousness (See Hughes, 2002) that new ways of theorising developed, and the potential for resistance (Skeggs, 1997). For example, the epistemological approach, feminist standpoint, which 'is one major strand of theorising experience' (Hughes, 2002:153) (see section 3.3). For example:

Epistemologies are theories of knowledge that address questions such as 'who can be a knower', 'what can be known', what constitutes and validates knowledge, and what the relationship is or should be between knowing and being (that is, epistemology and ontology) (Stanley and Wise, 1990:26).

Standpoint theory focuses on the lived experiences of women (Harding, 2004) in an attempt to offer an understanding of how women see the world (see section 3.3). Indeed, Stanley and Wise (1993:157) argue that this understanding is interpreted by doing feminist consciousness which is '*a/ways*' central to the feminist research process. Feminist consciousness and consciousness-raising is apparent in most of

the literature concerned with feminist practice. It relates to the changing state of consciousness through the existence of consciousness-raising activities such as, feminist researchers reinterpreting personal experiences of women then presenting theoretical understandings, which enable women to name their experiences, thus challenging their state of consciousness (see Stanley and Wise, 1993). Feminist standpoint will be discussed more in-depth in chapter three.

However, it was only in the late twentieth century that male violence against women in the home, was acknowledged worldwide as a problem and 'placed on the agendas of social and political change' (Dobash & Dobash, 2000:188). This recognition was due to the political struggles of feminist activists, researchers and scholars that brought violence against women to the fore, and this is to be discussed in the next section.

2.2 The context of domestic violence

Violence against women in the home is a global phenomenon, which has received much feminist attention both in academia and through women's organisations. Within the United Kingdom (UK), feminist academics and activists have been at the fore largely since the 1970s in raising the profile of domestic violence (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Hague and Malos, 2005; Hanmer & Itzin et al, 2000; Kirkwood, 1993). The impetus by feminist, activists, researchers, scholars and as the literature points out the, Violence Abuse and Gender Relations Research Unit based at the

University of Bradford (Hague, 1997) has brought what was a private issue into the public, prompting change to governmental responses to domestic violence in the UK, and domestic violence is now high on the political agenda (Hague, 1997; Hague and Malos, 2005; Hanmer & Itzin, et al, 2000; Harne and Radford, 2008).

Within the UK domestic violence was recognised as a social problem over two decades ago and it impacts widely on society including the health, social and legal services, and education and employment services (Home Office, 2009). One major step forward was:

The recognition of domestic violence by the United Nations as a human rights abuse in the 1990s (CEDAW, 1992; Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action 1995) has meant that domestic violence has achieved a much greater profile in terms of law and policy development (Harne and Radford, 2008:ix).

Domestic violence is now recognised as one of the most common crimes in the UK (Hague & Malos, 2005) and this impetus has meant a much improved response to service provision both nationally and locally (Harne and Radford, 2008). The *British Crime Survey*¹ (BCS) 2010/11 reports that domestic violence accounts for around 16% of all violent crime. However, it is apparent the survey is affected by serious underreporting (Home Office, 2011) therefore this figure could be much greater.

¹ The BCS is now called the England and Wales Crime Survey

The criminalisation of aspects of domestic violence in the UK was a welcome development, as perpetrators can now be brought to justice (Harne and Radford, 2008). However, there is no specific offence of 'domestic violence' (Harne and Radford, 2008; Women's Aid, 2009). It is on the whole based on physical and sexual violence, and more recently harassment and stalking, which are covered within the legal framework (Harne and Radford, 2008). One significant step forward that is highlighted in the literature is that of the '*Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act*' 2004 that was implemented by New Labour and this is discussed further in this chapter (see section 2.3).

Domestic violence has a profound impact on women, children and their wider families. It 'most frequently, happens behind firmly closed doors' (Hague and Malos, 2005:1). This gives impetus to silence and secrecy, which hides the abuse within the privacy of the home. It is hard to comprehend that in Britain on average domestic violence claims the lives of up to two women each week (Home Office, 2011). The statistics show that survivors of domestic violence will have experienced around thirty-five assaults prior to calling the police (Home Office, 2009). The BCS identifies that women:

Frequently report experiences of repeat victimisation. In 2010/11, three-quarters (73%) of all incidents were experienced by repeat victims (2010/11:62).

Domestic violence is widely acknowledged within the literature as having the highest hidden figures of all recorded crime (British Crime Survey, 2010/11; Hague and

Malos, 2005; Harne and Radford, 2008; Home Office, 1999; 2003). Mooney (2000:24) argues that:

The true extent of domestic violence is generally agreed to be an unknown quantity.

Feminist research indicates that the number of actual domestic violence incidents is much higher than the number of reported cases (Hanmer and Itzin et al, 2000; Harne and Radford, 2008; Mooney, 2000; Walby & Allen, 2004; Wilcox, 2006). Domestic violence is argued as being incalculable and Smith (1989:24) argues that:

Domestic violence has been recognised as an area which needs more detailed and in-depth research, particularly on the general population.

This suggests that research within the general population may provide an opportunity to highlight the hidden prevalence of domestic violence and understand why it goes unreported. However, to date there appears to be minimal research in this area, a concern, which has also been raised by other academics (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). Feminist consideration and research on domestic violence has developed a momentous knowledge base and brought the phenomena into greater attention publically. Much attention has been given to most aspects of domestic violence (Renzetti et al, 2001) and it is via this knowledge base that gives feminist researchers the opportunity to build on current understandings of the phenomena. This knowledge has also given impetus to governmental reforms, which are to be discussed in the next section (Hague, 1997).

2.3 Government Impetus: The focus of New Labour (1997-2010)

This research was undertaken while New Labour was in power, and all the fieldwork was completed before their demise in 2010. Therefore, the government policies reviewed in this chapter and the rest of the thesis relate to New Labour's reforms and the policies and practices implemented in response to domestic violence and help-seeking. The focus of the New Labour reforms was that of a multi-agency response to domestic violence (Hanman, 2000), which it is argued, was largely influenced through the work of both feminist activism (Hague, 1997; Harne and Radford, 2008; Itzin, 2000) and the co-ordinated approach by Women's Aid, which was already in existence. Indeed, Harne and Radford (2008:176) argue that:

In light of their opposition and struggle it is perhaps somewhat ironic that government recognising their expertise, required professionals new to the issue to learn and take the lead from Women's Aid in relation to domestic violence in service provision and multi-agency practice.

Despite the implementation of statutory and local government professionals who respond to domestic violence, Women's Aid remains the lead charity that responds to domestic violence in the UK (Harne and Radford, 2008).

Nevertheless, the literature highlights the many developments of New Labour in response to domestic violence was given impetus before they came into power in 1997 (Hague and Malos, 2005). The Inter-Departmental Group on Domestic Violence (1995) issued a circular encouraging inter-agency co-ordination, as one of

the principal planks of government policy on domestic violence (Hague 1997; Hague and Malos, 2005). This encouraged the prevention and protection of survivors experiencing domestic violence, through a co-ordinated approach (Home Office, 1995). When New Labour came into power in 1997, additional impetus was then given to the co-ordinated response to domestic violence, establishing frameworks within local authorities (LA) (Hague, 1997; James-Hanman, 2000).

The focus of the multi-agency framework by the Home Office was to bring support services responding to domestic violence together locally, for more effective intervention service (Harne and Radford, 2008). This encompassed both statutory and voluntary agencies, which included 'refuges and independent women's services' (Hague, 1997:93), in order to create an effective response to domestic violence. This response is argued as the government acknowledging the multi-dimensional nature of domestic violence and that an effective response requires a collective of agencies working together (Hague and Malos, 2005; Harne and Radford, 2008).

Government focus was based on crime reduction by implementing crime reducing strategies. The strategies were strengthened through the '*Crime and Disorder Act*' 1998, which brought about improvements to service provision (Hester and Westmarland, 2005). It is argued however, that funding through the government for refuges and outreach services were insufficient to meet the needs of survivors (Harne and Radford, 2008). There were also concerns that they were a smoke screen to disguise inaction (Hague, 1997) by some agencies and a fear that

Women's Aid and other local specialist agencies would be excluded from the integrated approach. However, this co-ordinated response by New Labour was set out in a series of papers over the decade they were in power.

The first paper '*Living without Fear*' was published in 1999 by the Cabinet and Home Office, which was aimed at reducing violence against women. It was anticipated this paper would set out an inclusive strategy to be implemented nationally (Hague and Malos, 2005). However, this did not happen as the paper only suggested proposals for national and local service provision; how this would be implemented was at the discretion and resources of local authorities.

What '*Living without Fear*' did was, to recognise the importance of education, and the need to raise awareness of domestic violence amongst the public and within statutory services. The government commissioned a series of research papers such as '*Tackling Domestic Violence: effective interventions and approaches*', to assess the effectiveness of existing responsive intervention (Hester and Westmarland, 2005). However, '*Living without Fear*' was criticised for merely being a guide for LA's to good practice and service provision and failed to implement a strategy in ending violence against women (Gillan & Samson, 2000)

In response to New Labour's manifesto Sunderland introduced the Wearside Domestic Violence Forum in 2001. It aimed to bring together both the voluntary and statutory agencies responding to domestic violence in Sunderland. The role of

representatives was to feedback to their individual services on decisions that were to jointly make a positive difference to the provision of services to anyone affected by domestic violence in Sunderland (Sunderland City Council, 2010).

However, in reality the setting up and management of forums is complex due to the various discourses and levels of awareness of domestic violence between the agencies involved (James-Hanman, 2000; Harne and Radford, 2008). This can result in complications and disagreements within the forums. Indeed, Hague (1997) highlighted that many forums throughout the UK were held back due to a lack of guidance, resources and through little involvement from some prominent statutory agencies.

A few years after *'Living without Fear'* that on the whole had provided recommendations to local authorities for a co-ordinated approach to domestic violence, the *'Safety and Justice'* consultation paper was published in 2003. The rhetoric built on previous proposals in *'Living without Fear'* with a focus on 'prevention, protection and justice' (Home Office, 2003:1).

The objective of 'prevention' was to change attitudes towards domestic violence through education within society. Policy strategies also focussed on raising awareness of domestic violence through public campaigns, thus to bring formal support agencies to the attention of women in the general public. Such campaigns were aimed at capturing women who were experiencing domestic violence but were not asking for help. However, as Hester and Westmarland found, there was little

research, which has assessed the impact of the campaigns in the specific areas where they had been implemented.

Agency responses to domestic violence were also challenged and training was recommended for all front-line staff to ensure intervention at the earliest opportunity (Home Office, 2003). Recommendations were made to LA's to improve and act on the objectives. However, this meant there was what was decided as a 'post code lottery' (Women's Aid, 2008) as service intervention was dependent on the resources and direction of LA's. Hester and Westmarland (2005) point out that the training implemented to raise awareness of domestic violence should last more than the planned one day for a full exploration of the intricacy of domestic violence. However, training for all local authority staff was just a recommendation and it was not mandatory for front-line staff to participate. This rested with the discretion of the agency as to what and when training would be implemented.

'Safety and Justice' had also focussed on improving the legal framework and this included a consultation with survivors that was, as Hague and Malos (2005) argue, conducted too quickly due to time limits and the input from survivors could have been more effective. However, the government did propose a broad range of measures aimed at further improving service responses and the government as discussed pledged an extra £9 million for refuge services (Hester and Westmarland, 2005; Hague and Malos, 2005), which suggested they were taking domestic violence seriously.

New Labour set out their focus in 2003 for new legislation for domestic violence in *'Putting Victims First: Publication of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Bill'* (Musgrove and Groves, 2007). This was to improve the legal rights of survivors as well as ensuring women had access to support and protection (Musgrove and Groves, 2007). This agenda led to the implementation of the *'Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act' 2004*. The Act was acknowledged as the most radical overhaul of legislation in response to domestic violence for over three decades (Harne and Radford, 2008). One positive aspect was that it:

Involved wide spread consultation with the women's voluntary sector as well as those in the statutory sector and feminist experts on domestic violence in academia and the law and meant that women who had an understanding of domestic violence were finally being heard (Harne and Radford, 2008:101).

Despite the significant changes in the acknowledgement of domestic violence as a crime it was not without criticism (see, Harne and Radford, 2008). For example:

It takes the process out of the woman's hands, and the Crown Prosecution Service will be able to pursue proceedings against her wishes. So it may be disempowering, and have consequences which she is powerless to stop (Women's Aid, 2007:1).

This raises concerns that the Act may prevent women coming forward, or contacting the police for fear that their partners may be criminalised. However, as Musgrove and Groves (2007) and others argue, the Act was implemented to give the police powers of arrest, which are meant to ensure survivors receive a more positive

service than they have had from the police in the past. The effectiveness of the police response however, is dependent on police discretion and their willingness to intervene (Edwards, 2000). To point out, there are also other forms of legislation, which can be used in response to domestic violence such as, '*The protection from Harrassment Act*' (1997) to deal with post separation stalking. This has proven useful for women who had previously co-habited and experienced harassment after the relationship had ended (Harne and Radford, 2008).

The government continued to show they were taking domestic violence seriously and, following further research, New Labour implemented the first '*National Report for Domestic Violence*' (2005), which provided direction for local multi-agency partnerships. The objective identified in the report aimed to improve early identification to enable intervention at the earliest opportunity. The report highlighted improvements for all agencies involved, ensuring participation from key agencies and a motivation to further develop relationships within local forums (Home Office, 2005). It was argued however, that the approach was problematic due to an imbalance of power between the agencies (Hague, 1997; Hague and Malos, 2005). One of the most common difficulties was:

The often manifested tendency of the largest statutory agency to take over the work done and adopt dominating positions, sometimes unintentionally (Hague and Malos, 2005:172).

This makes it difficult for some of the smaller agencies who were, on the whole specialist agencies responding to domestic violence, to have their views heard and

taken seriously. Concerns of power imbalances between agencies had been raised previously as local refuge groups were pushed to one side within forums as they were not taken seriously by statutory agencies (Hague, 1997).

Much of the rhetoric was reiterated throughout previous papers by New Labour. However, what was missing was, how the service improvements would be advocated in the public domain, such as timescales, reviews and importantly sufficient resources (Women's Aid, 2006). Smaller specialist voluntary agencies also raised concerns of serious under-staffing in refuges that prevented some attending multi-agency meetings (Hague, 1997).

New Labour continued with their impetus and the *Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme* was implemented and this was to be rolled out countrywide. There was a concern however that:

IDVA's² and specialist domestic violence courts need to be available to all domestic violence survivors in all areas not just 25 in pilot or 'high incidence' areas. It is also critical that the development of IDVAs builds on what services already exist and what is provided by local Women's Aid organisations and other domestic violence services (Women's Aid, 2006:3).

Harne and Radford (2008) point out that evaluations of the domestic violence courts suggests an increase in convictions rates, which prompted the government to open up more specialist courts across the country. However, government strategies under

² IDVA's Independent Domestic Violence Advisory services

New Labour focussed on support, predominantly aimed at preventing further abuse and supporting a survivor to leave a violent relationship. This meant a short-term approach, by providing temporary accommodation and support to access financial services to aid the transition of rehousing (Wilcox, 2006). It has been recognised within research that there needs to be more long-term support to aid resettlement and that this needs to be addressed within service intervention (Hester and Westmarland, 2005).

New Labour's final paper: *'Together We Can End Violence Against Women And Girls, Tackling Violence Against Women'* (2008) was implemented. This addressed further improvements to service provision and it focussed on prevention, provision and protection for women and children: Prevention was based on changing attitudes towards domestic violence, provision was based on effective service provision and protection was aimed at ensuring an effective criminal justice response (Home Office, 2009). This report focused on both women and girls for the first time in an attempt to deal with offences that are disproportionately experienced by females.

The MARAC³ programme that had been implemented in 2003 was given impetus in the *Safety and Justice* paper. This placed the framework firmly within a statutory setting. For example:

This was successful in improving victim safety in the MARACs initiative, which focuses on survivors

³ Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference aimed at protecting high risk victims

identified as being at highest risk (Robinson and Tregidga, 2005:84).

The MARAC programme protects high risk survivors from further abuse. However, it is argued that it removes the awareness of women who are at risk of low-level violence, leaving them at risk of repeated abuse (Robinson, 2004). Government impetus was a step in the right direction and it was being taken seriously as a crime; however, in order for services to be successful there needs to be adequate funding to enable resources to be put in place (Harne and Radford, 2008). Indeed, Harne and Radford (2008) argue, that some projects are described as 'one stop shops' with all the agencies encompassed under one roof but these can vary dramatically, dependent again on the agencies involved.

The focus of government intervention appears to be on high level or crisis support that is imperative to the safety of women and girls, but there is also a need for longer term support as highlighted above. It is evident in the rhetoric of New Labour policies that the focus is on multi-agency practice at a local level in an attempt to improve service intervention. This Hanman (2000:270) argues:

Was part of an attempt by them to respond to the 'cry' of joined up thinking and a response to the new statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act.

However, there was no explicit legal requirement to respond to domestic violence by LA's. The multi-agency frameworks were made up of statutory, voluntary and third sector agencies. However, the service varied across the country dependent on the

agencies, which were active within specific areas (Harne and Radford, 2008). As discussed however, Sunderland did respond to the recommendations of the legislation and implemented the Wearside Domestic Violence Forum to lead on the co-ordinated approach within the City. However, there does not appear to be any data assessing the effectiveness of the co-ordinated approach and the impact the provision had on survivors. The focus of the government and LA's as discussed was to prevent domestic violence happening however, for this to be successful there needs to be an understanding of what domestic violence is.

2.4 Defining Domestic Violence

Domestic violence and the complexity surrounding what it actually is has been the subject for discussion among feminists, researchers, practitioners and policy makers largely since the 1970s. Domestic violence has to be recognised and named to enable women a path to help-seeking to change their situation. Defining domestic violence and the myriad of behaviours associated with it is in itself complex and, through feminist consideration, there came a new rhetoric on violence against women by men into the public sphere, bringing about change (Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

As knowledge about domestic violence has developed, so has its definition and the terminology used to describe it (Donovan and Hester, 2010:2).

Domestic violence is no longer understood as just physical violence within the confines of marriage, eradicating the use of the word 'wife battering' in the UK. This brought recognition that women who are dating, co-habiting, or have left the relationship are still at risk of domestic violence. Within the UK it is also acknowledged that domestic violence can happen in same sex relationships, regardless of gender (Donovan et al, 2006), heterosexual relationships, as well as perpetrated by other family members. Until very recently, domestic violence was regarded as violence between adults (Hague and Malos, 2005). However, as discussed in 2013, the definition was recently widened to include persons from the age of 16yrs. While the knowledge base about domestic violence has broadened, the statutory definition remains fairly narrow and it is an area that is contested within the literature. The Home Office (2009) definition at the time of this research was:

Domestic violence is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality. The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional. It can include 'honour-based violence', female genital mutilation, and forced marriage.

Women's Aid (2009) defines domestic violence as:

Domestic violence is physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'. Domestic violence may include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are in themselves inherently violent.

The Home Office definition is narrow in comparison to that of Women's Aid but the Home Office definition focuses on an 'incident based understanding of domestic violence' (Donovan and Hester, 2010:2). However, the Home Office definition does need to reflect the framework of the criminal justice system, but how domestic violence is defined influences how it is understood (Itzin, 2000). Indeed, the Home Office acknowledged in '*Living Without Fear*' (1999) that the definition was introduced for the purpose of 'harmonising statistics across England and Wales' (2003:4). The definition implemented by the Home Office at the time of this research was not uniform throughout the statutory services and criminal justice system and varied slightly. Predominantly, the emphasis of the Home Office definition is on physical and sexual violence as both are punishable by law. Indeed, Wilcox, (2006:724) argues:

This has led to the widespread perception of domestic violence as discrete incidents rather than an ongoing process.

This makes it difficult for behaviours such as emotional and financial abuse that can have long-term damaging effects (Stark, 2007; Wilcox, 2006), to be taken seriously. The focus on physical and sexual violence in relation to domestic violence as a crime has somewhat silenced or ignored other forms of abuse, for example financial abuse was, at the time of this research, omitted from the Home Office definition of domestic violence.

Going back to the definition by Women's Aid, it draws on the elements of power and control, which recognises the impact of coercive control and which has only very recently been added to the Home office definition⁴. This recognises beyond physical and sexual violence, incorporating the impact psychological/emotional and financial abuse can have on women. The Women's Aid definition takes into account power and control, which:

Underlies the use of abuse and violence, and even though individual agencies play lip service to this definition, it is frequently not translated into practice (Hanman, 2000:279).

As discussed earlier in this section, the statutory definition is shaped around the legal framework and this informs how statutory provision is delivered.

The literature illustrates that power and control underpin domestic violence (Dobash and Dobash, 1987, 1992; Hague and Malos, 2005, Stark, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). The elements of power and control also enable an understanding of low-level abuse, which presents the opportunity of escalation to a higher level of violence once women are rendered subordinate. Dobash and Dobash (1992) point out however, that when focussing on definitions of domestic violence, many issues begin to arise and one such issue is the narrowness and broadness of definitions and what they do or do not incorporate. This complexity is illustrated within both the Home Office and Women's Aid definition of domestic violence.

⁴ In March 2013 the Home Office broadened its definition of domestic violence to include coercive control .

There is also a concern around the use of the word 'violence,' whilst it has political advantages it presents implications for research and explanations of the broader aspect of domestic violence (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Donovan and Hester, 2010; Wilcox, 2006). Violence is a difficult concept in which to define and there are many arguments within the literature as to whether the word 'violence' should be used in understandings of domestic violence (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Donovan and Hester, 2010; Hague and Malos, 2005; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). The term 'violence' is used to encompass many forms of behaviour in a range of ways and, as Kelly (1988) has long since pointed out, respondents as well as researchers have varying understandings of what is 'real violence'. Mason (2002) defines violence as being the use of physical force by one person/s upon the body of another. However, Mooney (2000) suggests that severity also constitutes what is recognised and what is not foregrounding its intricacy. For example:

Some respondents may see a push or a shove as physical violence, whereas others will not. The values held by respondents are likely to be affected by gender, age, ethnicity, class and education (Mooney, 2000:143).

Dobash and Dobash (1992:5), illustrate the scope of violence:

It may include behaviours ranging from verbal harassment, flashing, and unwanted advances to date rape, attempted murder or murder.

The differing perspectives and the broadness of the word 'violence' highlights the intricacy of it, and how the context in which it is positioned may affect its awareness

and how it is understood. However, whether physical or sexual violence, it inflicts emotional/psychological harm on a woman but, this is hidden due to the focus on the physical act of violence (Wilcox, 2006). Johnson (1995) utilised the term 'patriarchal terrorism' as a means of explaining men's violence against women. This incorporates power and control taking into account all aspects of domestic violence (Johnson, 1995).

However, the literature presents arguments to hold on to the term violence as it recognises the seriousness of the injuries that can be sustained. Others however, argue for the term domestic abuse to be used:

To de-emphasise physical violence and to include the possibilities of other kinds of violence such as, emotional, financial and sexual (Donovan and Hester, 2010:3).

This argument is ongoing and both terms are now commonly used as a means of understanding domestic violence and the subjective experiences of violence against women. Itzin (2000:357) argues however:

How violence is conceptualised and defined will determine what is visible and seen and known; how it is understood and explained; and what is not done about it through policy and practice.

This argument reflects the narrow definition of the Home Office that is bound up in the legal framework, and what behaviours are criminalised and what is not. There is much discourse as to whether the ambiguous term 'domestic violence' should be

used at all through the lack of uniformity in defining domestic violence within relationships between policy makers and researchers (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). Mooney (1993) found there are two levels to that of definition: how researchers define domestic violence, and how the women define domestic violence, there is wide variation. This was also raised by Liang et al, (2005), who found that women define and understand domestic violence through their social context. Liang et al, (2005) went on to argue that individuals define problems in many ways and how they are defined depends on their severity or how they are labelled and this influences whether or not help is needed.

On the whole, domestic violence is understood as physical violence (Dobash and Dobash, 1992, 1998; Donovan and Hester, 2010; Hague and Malos, 2005; Harne and Radford, 2008; Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). Donovan and Hester (2010:1) argue this is influenced by what they have identified as the 'public story' through societal understandings maintaining domestic violence to be on the whole physical violence. The discourse suggests this is influenced through the narrow definition by the government, which is reflective of the legal framework that criminalises physical and sexual violence, and prioritises formal intervention. Wilcox (2006) goes on to argue the prominence of physical violence has the tendency to silence other accounts of domestic violence such as sexual, emotional and financial abuse. This will be given consideration in the following section as non-recognition of the behaviour as abusive ultimately prevents help-seeking.

2.5 The broader aspect of domestic violence

The focus on physical violence, as discussed, has given impetus to the need to act on crisis provision, thus ensuring the safety of women and children (see Hester, 2010, 2011; Meyer, 2010; Wilcox, 2006). This focus is argued as bringing attention to severe incidents of domestic violence, and has hidden the continuing progression of other forms of abuse and the effect they have. For instance:

Domestic violence is not a one-off event or incident but part of an ongoing pattern of controlling behaviour. Often very subtle signals can be extremely threatening: violence does not have to be overt to achieve its end (Harwin and Barron, 2000:206).

The more complex elements of domestic violence can incorporate emotional, psychological, financial and sexual abuse, and are difficult to recognise and name. All of which are to be discussed in this section.

It is argued within the literature that emotional and psychological abuse is evident in all other forms of domestic violence (Hague and Malos, 2005; Stark 2007; Wilcox 2006). Kirkwood (1993) has long since argued that emotional abuse is difficult to define as it cannot be quantified or labelled as physical violence can, by a slap or punch. Wilcox (2006:45) suggests this is problematic as:

We all have mood swings, ups and downs in their emotional feelings, which can result in negative actions/responses from time to time.

This suggests when actions become abusive in response to what is seemingly ups and downs the abuse has the possibility to become normalised within the relationship. The emotional abuse, which is argued, underpins domestic violence, can begin in the early stages of the relationship at a low-level (Wilcox, 2006). However, the low-level abuse then has the opportunity to escalate through a normalisation of the abusive behaviour. Hague and Malos (2005) and Stark (2007) amongst others, point out that emotional abuse is diverse as the behaviour can include intimidation, verbal assaults, humiliation and degradation.

In order to make sense of the emotional base underpinning domestic violence Kirkwood (1993), offered an in-depth analysis of the complexity of defining emotional abuse. Stark (2007, 2012) has since added to the knowledge base offering an understanding through coercive control and what he has termed the 'micromanagement' of women's everyday lives, both of which are to be discussed in this section. Wilcox (2006) however, has recently expanded on the work of Kirkwood, and included understandings through love and shame in her book *Surviving Domestic Violence*. Donovan and Hester (2011) also argue love is an element of domestic violence that needs to be encompassed as a form of emotional abuse. Therefore, the impact of love is to be discussed further in this section.

Coercive control is recognised as a major form of emotional abuse, and Stark (2007, 2012) amongst others, argues this dominance is pursued by abusive men so they can get their own way. For example, in terms of a woman being told what to wear, or how to do her hair is, what Stark argues, the 'micromanagement' (2007:

274) of the everyday lives of women by abusive men. Jones and Schechter (1992) suggest that such tactics implement material constraints on women through the use of coercive control. Feminist academics and activists have raised concerns about the element of coercive control as it limits a woman's autonomy, (Hague and Malos, 2005; Stark, 2007, 2012), and can distort a woman's subjective reality (Kirkwood, 1993). This ultimately leads to dependency by the survivor on the perpetrator (Jones and Schechter, 1992; Stark, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). This in turn prevents help-seeking. Therefore, the very recent recognition of the elements of coercion and control as a form of domestic violence in the Home Office definition is welcoming news.

Kirkwood (1993) identified a conceptual framework to provide an understanding of the components that underpin emotional abuse, and as discussed both Stark (2007) and Wilcox (2006) have built on that knowledge. The components were drawn from women's personal experiences of emotional abuse, and implemented to describe the base of emotional violence and included:

Degradation, fear, objectification, deprivation, over burden of responsibility and a distortion of a woman's subjective reality (Kirkwood, 1993:45/57).

Kirkwood (1993) argued there are two bases to emotional abuse, one being the consequence physical violence has on a woman's emotional well-being, and the other is endorsed at an emotional level. Kirkwood (1993:58), found that:

In a woman's lived experience, the components are interwoven in such a way that they comprise a whole which has properties beyond merely the sum of those individual components.

The components highlight the complexity of emotional abuse, and the devastating effect this can have on women long after the violence has ended (Kirkwood, 1993; Stark, 2007; Wilcox, 2006).

Degradation (Kirkwood, 1993) related to the feelings of survivors and how the women felt valued in comparison to others, feelings such as shame and blame became inherent leaving the women at risk of further abuse. Fear was linked to the survivors' emotional and physical well-being and Kirkwood found that the biggest fear was that components they did not know when the next attack could be. This component of fear (Kirkwood, 1993) however, did not just relate to personal safety; survivors were also fearful for their emotional well-being. In comparison, Wilcox (2006) found that although women were fearful of further abuse, they were also fearful of their future alone, in a new environment, and having to rebuild their life with their children.

Objectification was used to make sense of perpetrator's behaviour by treating women as objects with no individual resources or autonomy. Kirkwood (1993) linked this component to the external appearance of women through the perpetrator's demands of how he wanted her to look. This controlling behaviour, as discussed, is termed by Stark (2007:274) as the 'micromanagement' of women within

heterosexual relationships. Stark (2007:193) argues this behaviour, 'coercive control was born out of the microdynamics of everyday life', suggesting it has always been there, it is tolerated as a gender norm. This component by Kirkwood also works to understand the exploitation of women as sexual objects. MacKinnon (2004) amongst others, have argued that women being seen as sexual objects can lead to the sexual domination of women by men. Coercive sexual behaviour is argued to be used by men to sustain male privileges, in which to satisfy their own sexual desires (Stark, 2007, 2009).

Kirkwood found a commonality amongst women was that of deprivation through the demands of controlling behaviour. This was linked to economic and social deprivation and it could be argued it is an aspect of financial abuse as abusive men can and do take control and allocate the finances within the household (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Wilcox, 2006). Coercive control is used by men to limit a woman's activity both inside and outside the home, thus enforcing dependence (Stark, 2007). This in turn can have an emotional impact as stress over the finances affects the emotional well-being of women, this could also relate to objectification via the element of jealousy, which cuts women off from family and friends. Kirkwood (1993) also linked financial control to social deprivation through intense isolation (Wilcox, 2006).

The 'over burden of responsibility' was acknowledged by Kirkwood (1993) as a component of emotional abuse as it was linked to the day-to-day management or 'micromanagement' (Stark, 2007) of the family within the abusive relationship.

Women are identified as responsible for the emotional management of the family as well as the practical day to day concerns (Stark, 2007, 2012; Wilcox, 2006). Women can feel an overwhelming responsibility for the violence as the blame can be shifted on them by their partner (Donovan and Hester, 2010; Fraser, 2003; Lloyd, 2000). This component presents the opportunity however, to link elements of financial abuse by the over burden of women carrying debt for a long time after a relationship has ended (Wilcox, 2006).

The distortion of a woman's subjective reality appears to be the end process, which creates doubt in the woman as to who she was, through low self-esteem and confidence (Kirkwood, 1993). This eventually produced uncertainty about how they perceived themselves to be, to that of how the perpetrator wanted them to look. The abusive, coercive behaviours intensified until there was total control that eventually 'distorted the survivor's subjective reality' (Kirkwood, 1993). The emotional investment by women in their relationship is argued to encourage this compliancy (Jones and Schechter, 1992). However, it could be argued that the components identified by Kirkwood, as a whole, link with the 'micromanagement' (Stark, 2007; 2012) of women, through the use of coercion and control, which eventually leads to subordination.

The discourse around each component presents an interplay, as there appears the opportunity to 'distort a woman's subjective reality' (Kirkwood, 1993) through coercive behaviour, limited autonomy and the impact on the emotional well-being of women. This, as discussed, eventually leads to subservient behaviour by the

women through the man's requests (Stark, 2007), and this is evident in all the components that make them a whole. The discourse illustrates how the components work together as a whole to trap a woman within an abusive relationship, presenting more power together than as a standalone unit. This links the 'micromanagement' of women by abusive men who utilise power and control for their own gratification (Stark, 2007, 2012). However, the components by Kirkwood do not offer an understanding of how the abusive behaviour becomes normalised and minimised within abusive heterosexual relationships, which at the onset may contribute to low-level control, but renders a woman subordinate as the element of control escalates.

The complexity of the behaviour is underpinned by many components and low-level coercion can start at the onset of the abusive relationship. For example, a woman being asked to wear a certain item of clothing by an abusive partner may be understood by a woman as a 'strength of a man's love' for her (Wilcox, 2006:46). Indeed, Donovan and Hester (2010) found that the love for a partner were key reasons as to why both women and men remained in an abusive relationship. However,

Defining love is complex as there are many meanings that relate understandings to both 'subjects and objects' (Fraser, 2003:16)

Fraser (2003) suggests that we feel love differently depending on the emotional engagement we have with either the subject or object. Eisikovits and Buchinder (2000:60) suggest however:

That emotions are vital to the way we know the world and the process of knowledge acquisition evolves in three stages. Firstly people become self-aware and then they define their emotions, secondly they experience emotions in the light of their definition and thirdly through their emotional experiences, they define their existence in the world.

This definition suggests that through love and emotions we come to be and know who we are, suggesting this shapes our ontology. When a woman falls in love, the emotions and behaviours that follow will then shape her subjective reality ultimately changing her ontological positioning. However, intimate heterosexual relationships create strong emotional feelings (Wilcox, 2006) that will undoubtedly strengthen the emotional investment (Jones and Schechter, 1992) in the relationship.

Fraser (2003) points out that through popular culture we are opened up to many discourses of love, which are attained through love being acknowledged as the 'hallmark of humanity' (Gray, 1993:273). This discourse presents pictures of happy-ever-afters that ultimately gives opportunity for the exploitation and abuse of women by men they love (Fraser, 2003). Indeed, Lloyd (2000) argues women in love expect protection from the outside world and a happy ever after but, in reality, the physical assault can come from within from the man she loves. This understanding gives expectation to a woman that, by remaining in the relationship, there is hope there will be change in the partners behaviour (Wilcox, 2006).

However, in comparison, the love declared by an abusive man to a woman can be used to manipulate his own way (Lloyd, 1991, 2000; Donovan and Hester, 2010).

For example:

I Love you so much I can't stand seeing you talk to another man, suggests different expressions of abuse will have different effects on the victim (Marshall, 1996:152).

This emotional gesture will influence as to whether or not the behaviour is recognised as unacceptable, and, as to whether help would be sought. Love has until very recently received minimal attention in understandings of domestic violence. Indeed, Donovan and Hester (2010:4) argue:

That an essential aspect of domestic violence that occurs in the context of relationships, ostensibly entered into on the basis of consent and notions of love/emotion, has been ignored.

They go on to argue that love needs to be included as part of the continuum of emotional abuse. It is apparent that emotional abuse encompasses all forms of domestic violence and underpins sexual violence (Lloyd and Emery, 2000; Wilcox, 2006), including the element of love (Donovan and Hester (2010), which can blur the boundary of acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour.

The literature highlights that the link between sexual violence and domestic violence is lost within legislation, and in service provision (Harne and Radford, 2008; Kelly and Lovett 2005). Sexual violence is recognised as one of the common aspects of

domestic violence (Johnson, 1995), but for many women it goes unrecognised (Weiss, 2009). Defining sexual abuse is in itself problematic. For instance, Dobash and Dobash (1992) argue, definitions are critical as they affect an individual's perceptions of what sexual violence is.

This is evident in the discourse around definition, as narrow definitions are not adequate in defining the whole aspect of domestic violence (see section 2.4). Kelly (1988) has long since highlighted the complexity of sexual violence through what she discusses as a continuum of sexual abuse. However, Kelly (1988) also pointed out, that it is not useful to think of the continuum in terms of severity as it is only the women who can define the seriousness of their individual assaults. This again highlights the complexity of the elements encompassing domestic violence, as how it is recognised and understood will influence what is known about it.

Sexual violence is complex and abusive behaviour can be normalised within the heterosexual relationship, via understandings of it being a 'duty' for women (Lloyd, 2000; Weiss 2009, 2011). Weiss, 2009 found that this 'duty' or what is acknowledged a part of a woman's role within an intimate relationship, normalises sexual abuse in the heterosexual relationship. What is acknowledged as part of a woman's 'duty' or 'role' appears to mean ensuring the sexual satisfaction of a male partner regardless of a woman's own feelings. This appears to be influenced through the construction of male sexuality, and a biological sex drive that needs to be satisfied (see p:55). This gendered normalisation Bart (1986) referred to as the

practice of 'altruistic sex'. The normalisation also influences why women do not recognise rape or sexual assault in marriage (MacKinnon 2004; Weiss 2009, 2011). For example, Mackinnon (2004:172) argues, it is difficult to recognise a 'sex crime when it just looks like sex'.

This non-recognition of sexual abuse is reflected in the BCS 2010/11 as only 0.5% of women reported being raped or experienced an attempted rape in the last year, and only 0.6% acknowledged a sexual assault or attempted assault within their intimate relationship. The figures are suggested by Rape Crisis (2010) to show a huge under representation of the actual number of assaults that took place. However, the BCS also acknowledged the statistics are affected through underreporting.

Unwanted sexual attention within the intimate relationship becomes normalised as typical behaviour rather than aberrant through what is acknowledged as a conjugal right (Weiss, 2009, 2010). However, when an incident is labelled as 'aberrant' it can be denied as a one-off or weighed up in terms of severity against others (Liang et al, 2005). It is unlikely that help would be sought in response to the 'aberrant' behaviour. How the unwanted sexual behaviour is defined however, is dependent on a woman's perceptions and this highlights the intricacy of naming coercive sex (Stark 2007; Weis, 2009) within the intimate heterosexual relationship. Weiss (2009) argues, unwanted sexual experiences for women becomes normalised in heterosexual relationships because, coercion becomes 'normal', part of the routine, blurring the boundaries of consent.

Coercive sex by men was also present in the framework implemented by both Bart (1986), and Kelly (1988). Bart identified a continuum that started with consensual sex, which then moves through to altruistic sex, where a woman performs the act as she feels guilty or sorry for her partner. This moves to complaint sex where objections are made against the act but this can lead to rape (Bart, 1986). This differs in terms of Kelly's (1988) continuum, which is based on the acts being non-consensual, whereas Bart refers to the acts starting consensually. There are similarities between Bart's (1986) 'altruistic sex' and 'complaint sex' and Kelly's (1988) 'pressurised sex' as they all relate to coerced sex within the heterosexual relationship. However, it could be argued whether coerced sex is consensual, but the distinction is going unrecognised through its complexity within the heterosexual relationship as it becomes normalised (Weiss, 2009).

Weiss (2009, 2011), as does MacKinnon (2004), argues that sexual aggression goes unrecognised as it is seen as natural through biological urges, normalising the unwanted sexual attention. This belief appears to reconcile the intimate relationship after the sexual act of aggression, as it is tolerated as part of the marital role (Weiss, 2009). Therefore, Weiss (2009) suggests, the coercive sexual behaviour becomes tolerated as women believe there is nothing they can do, it becomes unimportant. This suggests the women tolerate the behaviour through the practice of 'altruistic sex' (Bart, 1986) as the women put the needs of the men before their own.

It is apparent gendered roles and expectations are blurring the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour within the heterosexual relationship,

preventing a pathway to help-seeking. This, as MacKinnon (2004) amongst others has long since argued, renders women objects for the sexual pleasure of men. This in turn gives impetus to the sexual exploitation of women both in the private and public sphere. Indeed, concerns have been raised by Dobash and Dobash (1992) regarding the definition of sexual violence and its complexity: how it is defined will influence how it is understood.

The literature suggests that emotional and sexual violence may have more prominence in the abusive heterosexual relationship than physical violence, but it is going unrecognised as domestic violence. Weiss (2009) found that if a woman experienced an act of sexual violence that was not accompanied by an act of physical violence, then it was acknowledged as part of the marital role. Financial abuse, or what has been termed economic or material deprivation, is now recognised as one aspect of domestic violence within definitions. However, it has received minimal attention with very little research. Indeed, Wilcox (2006:111) argues:

Literature on the economic aspects of domestic violence is, at an early stage of development and addresses two main areas: (1) the potential disruption of women's patterns of employment and (2) the possible financial impoverishment of women.

Harne and Radford (2008:6) similarly argue that financial abuse refers to the 'financial distribution and control of income'. Financial abuse can include behaviours such as withholding or stealing money, creating debt and leaving the woman

responsible for it, or not paying bills (Women's Aid, 2009). This is not exhaustive as it can also include the monitoring of a woman's own income (Harne and Radford, 2008), either covert or overtly through the use of coercive control. All understandings have similarities and recognise the complexity in recognising financial control within the heterosexual relationship as financial abuse, which can have a detrimental impact on the family.

Any association between domestic violence and poverty is uncertain (Walby and Allen, 2004), due to the minimal attention this area has received. It is difficult to understand any statistical evidence through the BCS as it is encompassed under emotional and financial abuse but the overall figure is low, with only 16.8% of incidents either emotional or financial being reported by women. The Home Office does now recognise financial abuse within its definition and within its policy and practice documents. However, it is not accredited with the same attention as physical and sexual violence. Walby and Allen (2004) have pointed out that women living in poverty are three times more likely to experience domestic violence than women from more affluent households. However, we should be mindful of the underreporting of domestic violence, more so from women in more affluent areas and the affect this may have on such figures.

Research by Wilcox (2006) has found that domestic violence does impact both directly and indirectly on a woman's employment. Through the disruption of her employment, this then affects a woman's financial standing, which has an impact on

both the woman and the family (Wilcox, 2006). The Home Office (2005) '*National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan Progress Report*' (2008/09) required government departments to implement policy procedures to raise awareness of domestic violence amongst its staff after recognising the effect this can have on women within the workplace.

The literature illustrates that the 'component of deprivation, and the over burden of responsibility' (Kirkwood, 1993:53/54), has the possibility to link elements of financial abuse to the emotional well-being of women through the struggles to pay household bills, and through women going hungry to feed their children. As well as women carrying the 'over burden of responsibility' (Kirkwood, 1993) of the debts until well after the relationship had ended (Wilcox, 2006).

Women suffering from extreme economic deprivation illustrated feeling a deep sense of uncertainty about the future and an inability to change circumstances such as basic needs (Kirkwood, 1993:53).

Dobash and Dobash (1992), found that women referred to the household income as for the family, but male partners took what they wanted, when they wanted it, regardless of the family. It is evident in the literature that women experiencing domestic violence can suffer impoverishment and hardship that impacts on the wider family (Dobash and Dobash 1992; Kirkwood 1993; Stark, 2007; Wilcox 2006). This, as the work of Wilcox (2006) suggests, is both during and after the relationship when women are trying to rebuild their lives both financially and materially. For example:

This involved having to establish a new home, increased travel costs, communication costs, legal fees, and other every day expenses (Wilcox, 2006:128).

Women living in abusive relationships may have to manage the household finances, and it is apparent from the literature that this can be a constant struggle for some (Kirkwood, 1993; Wilcox, 2006). For example, Wilcox (2006) argues, women could not always keep control of the budget through the actions of the partner taking more money when he needed it, or for some it was a problem actually getting any housekeeping at all. Through this behaviour, poverty was intensified and women were left to deal with mounting debt both during and after the relationship had ended. Indeed, Jones and Schechter (1992) linked aspects of coercive control, for example forbidding a woman to shop, to material constraints such as control over the money. This understanding through what they identified as 'entrapment in personal life' (Jones and Schechter, 1992:203) brought what was identified by Stark (2007) as a new perspective to understandings of coercive control.

Financial abuse has not received as much attention in its own right until very recently (Wilcox, 2006), as understandings appear to have been included within emotional abuse. From the minimal literature available on financial abuse, it is evident there needs to be more in-depth research in this area regardless of how it is presented. It is suggested in the discourse that impoverishment can affect the emotional well-being of the woman and the wider family long after the relationship

has ended. However, it is evident within the literature that there are many barriers to overcome before women seek help and privacy in the home is one such barrier.

2.6 Privacy in the home

It is well documented that domestic violence is commonly understood as physical violence. Nevertheless, it is apparent that physical violence can also go unrecognised as domestic violence (Fugate et al, 2005; Hague and Malos, 2005; Wilcox, 2006). Societal acknowledgement that individuals in families fought with each other brought an acceptance or tolerance of what became normalised behaviour in every day family life (Hague and Malos, 2005). Domestic violence was regarded as a personal or private matter remaining hidden in the home, with families left to get on with it (Dobash and Dobash, 1992: Hague and Malos, 2005). However when domestic violence was brought into the public sphere and recognised as a crime:

The UK relied upon on less radical more piecemeal strategy of applying existing criminal law provisions to domestic violence incidents (Harne and Radford, 2008:22)

Stark (2012), as does Harne and Radford (2008) argue that by using the legal strategies already in place, they were unfit for purpose, as many of the statutes were implemented to deal with stranger and public order offences. The discourse suggests this prevents a barrier to naming experiences of domestic violence as a criminal act. For example Stark (2012:201) argues:

Some of the tactics used in coercive control are criminal offenses, such as stalking, while others are crimes only if committed against strangers, such as economic exploitation or sexual coercion. But most of the tactics abusers use in coercive control have no legal standing, are rarely identified with abuse, and are almost never targeted by police or the courts.

This brings to the fore the intricacy of domestic violence and a significant difference to that of a stranger assault. While it is problematic recognising and naming behaviours other than physical abuse, as domestic violence, it appears a further struggle for action to be taken. In the UK there is now the *Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act* 2004, but as discussed in section 2.3, this is not without criticism. However, it is suggested within the literature that by understanding the difference between domestic violence and a stranger assault, it will provide an insight to the nature of domestic violence (Harne and Radford, 2008).

A physical or sexual assault can be accredited with the same significance whether by a stranger or an intimate partner. However, the discourse suggests it can have a greater impact when it occurs within the intimate relationship. For example, stranger attacks are predominantly a one-off assault, which happens in a public space (Harne and Radford, 2008; Stark, 2012) and are recognised as a crime. However:

Being assaulted by an intimate partner generates massive emotional distress and sense of loss, leading to a depth of insecurity. It forces uncomfortable recognition on the part of the survivor that home is no longer safe (Harne and Radford, 2008:22).

In comparison to a one-off assault by a stranger, violence against women in the home is a continuum of violence leaving women at risk of repeated abuse and raises issues of trust and feelings of betrayal (Harne and Radford, 2008). The literature suggests this is underpinned by emotional distress through insecurity and that home is no longer a safe place.

Wilcox, (2006) amongst others argue, that domestic violence incidents increase in strength and severity, and it is rarely a one-off assault like that of a stranger assault. Thus, a survivor is not just faced with a one-off incident as 'presumed by the criminal justice system' (Harne and Radford, 2008:23). Another difference to that of a stranger attack is that women are at greater risk when trying to leave an abusive relationship through the risk of revenge attacks (Kelly, 1999), and they also carry the burden of having to move and start again. This process may also for women be without the support of family and friends.

There are significant differences between stranger assaults and that of a domestic violence incident but, in the intimate relationship it is not accredited with the same seriousness as a stranger assault. This is argued, as a result of a failure to implement appropriate domestic violence legislation to reflect its intricacy (Harne and Radford, 2008; Stark, 2012), which may impact on why women do not seek help. However, it is evident within the literature that the privacy of the home presents many barriers that prevent women seeking help.

Within society, the active patriarchal system cuts across class, race, culture, age and gender, prominently discussed within feminist academic literature and is a key theme in relation to domestic violence (Connell, 1991; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Hague & Malos, 2005; Hanmer & Itzin et al, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). Family life is a central part of social structure and also the focus for gender inequality (Connell, 1991). The foundation and the discourse surrounding the privacy of the family make it difficult to understand. Nevertheless, clearly apparent is the need to understand past and present ideologies of masculine power and control, and its place in both the family and society, which enables men to benefit from this dominant social structure (Walby, 1992).

The use of the term 'patriarchy' was influenced by the feminist movement during the 1970s as a means of understanding men's control over women in society (Walby, 1992). Stark, (2007) argues however, the history of patriarchy cannot be used to understand patriarchal systems as they are today, as there are differing elements. However, there are cultures today that uphold traditional values that entrap women in the domestic sphere with men maintaining supremacy with societal approval (Hanman, 2000). For example, Asian women can be dominated by their husband, with extended families often failing to intervene even upon witnessing attacks (Hanmer, 2000). Theoretical perspectives offered in relation to the subordination of women by men is imperative in making sense of the underlying structures that influence support of this display of power and control.

Societal expectations in the role of women as homemakers, wives and mothers being maternal, passive emotional beings, have influenced the subordination and oppression of women (Wilcox, 2006). The dominant societal acceptance of the institution of marriage, gives impetus to what is presumed a man's conjugal rights within the heterosexual relationship (Lloyd and Emery, 2000; Weiss, 2009, 2011; Wilcox 2006). This representation could be enforced through what Fraser (2003) argues is the discourse of love influenced through popular culture as discussed earlier in this chapter (see section 2.5).

The home is a fundamental element in the practice of domestic violence, as this is where the majority of abuse on women and children occurs:

Home (linked to family) is a potent site in which gender-differentiated meanings, relationships, and practices are produced, reinforced and potentially can be changed (Wilcox, 2006:85).

The home is paramount for women regardless of age, sexuality, ethnicity or class. It is a place, which has profound and poignant meaning (Harne and Radford, 2008; Wilcox, 2006). However, for many women and children, the home is a place of 'entrapment' (Stark, 2007, 2012) bringing fear, anxiety, danger, isolation, humiliation and degradation. The emotional bond the woman has with the home can lead to an arduous struggle in the resistance against domestic violence (Wilcox, 2006). Traditionally, mothers have been viewed as the main protector of her children and, at times, held responsible when things have gone wrong in the family (Hester, 2010, 2011; Meyer, 2011). As mothers are still seen as the main carers for children the

onus of blame is still held with the mother for not removing the children from the violence (Hester, 2010). Harne and Radford (2008), as Hester (2011) argue, mothers can be blamed if they fail to leave an abusive relationship and the children are put at risk.

Indeed, Kirkwood (1993) found that cultural blame or fault is directed at women in heterosexual relationships regardless of accountability, enforcing that women are responsible for the emotional management of the relationship. This can internalise the behaviour, which challenges a woman's subjective reality in that the woman believes she 'is doing something wrong' (LaViolette and Barnett, 2000; Weiss, 2009). This, as Dobash and Dobash (2000) argues results in many women remaining silent and the abuse goes hidden in the home for years. Wilcox (2006) argues that women carry the shame and blame for the family as well as the perpetrator, in that it goes beyond individual shame.

Research shows that as a means of maintaining control in the home following violence men hold women responsible for their feelings, leaving women feeling as if it is their fault the abuse happened (Dobash & Dobash, 1979,1992; Hague & Malos, 2005; Hanmer & Itzin et al, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). Men can use tears, apologies and expressions of love to hold on to their wife/partner, to prevent them leaving the family home (Fraser, 2003; Lloyd and Emery, 2000). The literature identifies that members of the extended family are also used in an attempt to prevent women leaving, to get her back or with threats of ensuring custody of her children (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001). The home is recognised as the most perilous

place for women, being at risk of physical abuse, rape, sexual assault and murder that can instil fear (Harne and Radford, 2008), but it is also the place this abuse remains hidden, thus preventing help-seeking.

2.7 Help-seeking patterns of survivors: Informal and formal support

It is evident within the literature that the prevalence and impact of domestic violence has received much attention and through this knowledge community intervention has been implemented (Postmus et al, 2009). Coker et al, (2002), amongst others, have highlighted the importance of community services that respond to domestic violence. It has been identified that survivors who seek help from either formal or informal networks can lessen the long-term impact of the abuse they have experienced (Liang et al, 2005). However, Postmus et al, (2009) argues, that the current literature does not offer an understanding of why, and how women seek help, and the usefulness of the services that are approached.

Research that identifies and addresses the barriers impacting on help-seeking in response to domestic violence has increased more recently (see Dunne, 2002; Fugate et al, 2005; Liang et al, 2005; Leone et al, 2007; Moe, 2007; Postmus et al, 2009). The knowledge on informal support is however, minimal in comparison to that of formal networks as any work in this area has focussed on social agency responses (Chatzifotiou & Dobash, 2001; Moe, 2007; Morley and Mullender, 1994;

Wilcox, 2006). There is however, beginning to emerge a focus of research on the patterns of help-seeking by survivors of domestic violence (Liang et al, 2005).

The literature illustrates that it is not as straightforward as just help-seeking, as the decision as to whether or not help will be sought in response to domestic violence stems from the problem of definition (Liang et al, 2005). It is apparent there is an intricate decision making process that is influenced by a woman's understanding of the behaviour, and the recognition that what she is experiencing is domestic violence. Research into help-seeking demonstrates that there are also other external factors, such as recognising the problem as unacceptable or acknowledging that the behaviour will not stop without help from others (Cauce et al, 2002). Further to this, there is an additional barrier of the severity of an incident that will influence whether or not help is sought (Goodman et al, 2003). This illustrates the complexity of domestic violence and the impact this has on potential help-seeking.

Liang et al, (2005) developed a theoretical model that offers a framework as a means of understanding the complex process of help-seeking. This model looks at the influences of 'individual, interpersonal and sociocultural' (Liang et al, 2005:73) understandings of survivors, which impact on whether or not help will be sought. This is then dependent on recognising that what they are experiencing is domestic violence, (Walby and Allen, 2004), and this gives impetus to the decision to seek help. This in turn reflects the type of help-seeking that will be sought (Liang et al, 2005). However, as Leone et al, (2007) argue, this may also be reliant on the type

of violence experienced, and the 'severity' of the violence as found by Goodman et al, (2003). Postmus, et al, (2009) have also found that when women do seek help they do not always disclose the full extent of the abuse they are experiencing.

To add to the complexity of domestic violence, Johnson (1995, 2008) has argued that domestic violence is itself not singular, and that there are two types of partner abuse that influences a different type of help-seeking. The first is 'common couple violence' which is situated within a specific conflict and does not escalate and the second is 'patriarchal or intimate terrorism', which serves to entrap survivors within the intimate relationship (Johnson, 1995:284). Research has shown that both present different needs and outcomes, which result in different help-seeking patterns (Leone et al, 2007). For example:

It was found that survivors of patriarchal or intimate terrorism (Johnson 1995) are more likely to need immediate protection and treatment, whereas those who experience common couple violence are less likely to come to the attention of support services (Leone et al, 2007:437).

This identifies the difficulties around a woman's decision to seek help and how the behaviour is contextualised, and what help is sought. Illustrated within the literature is that by understanding the diversity of domestic violence and help-seeking, will help improve outcomes for both women and perpetrators (Dobash and Dobash, 2000). This suggests that identifying a pathway to help-seeking is complex whether it is an informal or formal route and the decision to help-seek involves an intricate process.

The literature responding to the help-seeking behaviour of survivors shows that informal routes are the preferred support mechanism (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Leone et al, 2007; Liang et al, 2005 Moe, 2007) with many women not approaching formal agencies at all (Fine & Weis, 2000; Postmus et al, 2009). Indeed, Dunne (2002) argues, that for women to seek support the women have to confront a situation, then decide what information is needed to deal with that situation effectively. It is only at this point that information seeking will begin (Dunne, 2002).

However, both informal and formal support networks can have both a positive and negative influence on a survivor's help-seeking behaviour. For example, survivors who do seek help research shows it can improve their health (Liang et al, 2005) and lessen the effect long-term (Coker et al, 2002). Wilcox (2006) argues understanding a women's support history is imperative in shaping future help-seeking interventions, suggesting more research is needed in response to informal networks.

Informal networks are the predominant path to help-seeking but it not always a positive support route, as for some families, the abusive behaviour is an accepted part of family life with women advised to get on with it (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001, Moe, 2007; Walby, 1990). Chatzifotiou and Dobash, (2001) found that families also try to keep the matter as private as possible, leaving many women demoralised and at risk of repeated abuse as it prevents a pathway to help-seeking.

There is also the risk of family relationships becoming strained, with parents of survivors refusing support (Wilcox, 2006). Moe (2007:684) found that:

Responses by family and friends varied greatly and some were abandoned by those close to them.

Women as discussed can also be blamed for the violence (Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). For example, they must have deserved what had happened to them (Moe, 2007), which can then prevent any potential help-seeking for these women. However, to point out, not all experiences of informal help-seeking are negative as some women find the support they need from within their informal network (see Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Moe, 2007).

It is evident that research in relation to a survivor's family and friends support network is ignored with little/or no data collated in that area. Wilcox (2006:134) argues:

There is little research that directly asks family members for their perceptions of and responses to the abusive relationship.

Existing research shows there is a point within an abusive relationship when women eventually do actively seek support and primarily, it is within the private sphere. The outcome of informal help-seeking however, is dependent on the response the survivor receives and, this can prevent a woman changing her situation (Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). Evident is that most women experiencing domestic violence rarely seek support initially, remaining trapped in an abusive relationship (Hague & Malos,

2005; Postmus, et al, 2009; Wilcox, 2006). Whilst much domestic violence occurs in the home, it is not always in isolation and a woman's social network may have differing views towards the behaviour experienced within the relationship:

In kinship, friendship, neighbourhood and/or workplace networks, there is usually someone, other than the couple, who knows about or suspects that abuse is taking place (Wilcox, 2006:129).

Nevertheless, Wilcox (2006) identified that a common response from family members was to ignore the abuse, which proved to be an unsupportive stance for the survivor as this left the woman at risk of repeated abuse. More complex is the response of the abuser's family who tended to support the abuser, blaming the survivor for the family break up (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Moe 2007; Wilcox 2006). Consequently, the onus stayed with the woman in dealing with and managing the partner's abusive behaviour.

The literature indicates that for a woman to reveal abuse is occurring within their relationship can be embarrassing, humiliating and degrading with many women fearful of not being believed (Hague and Malos, 2005). It is evident in the help-seeking literature that this impacts on survivors seeking any help at all. Research carried out by Wilcox (2006) noted women found it difficult to discuss the abuse they experienced with their parents, fearful of upsetting them or they felt ashamed of their unsuccessful marriage/relationship or afraid that the abuser would turn on the parents. Usually, it was the mother who the abuse was disclosed to, rarely the father (Wilcox, 2006) illustrating the social normalisation of gendered discourse in

that women talk to women. Women also lose support from families and friends, with many survivors ending up isolated. For example:

Due to the coercion of their abusive partners restricting their freedom to keep in touch with family and friends, or partly due to women having to flee their own homes and communities (Wilcox, 2006:732).

This highlights the consequences for women who leave abusive relationships and it is well documented that it can also act as a barrier thus, preventing women leaving the abusive relationship (Moe, 2007; Stark, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). Mooney (2000) noted that friends were likely to be informed of the abuse prior to parents or other family members:

The most common support offered by female friends was talking and listening, in other words giving emotional support (Wilcox, 2006:139).

Friends are noted in the literature as excellent mediators between the survivor and the family as well as with social agencies in obtaining greater support (Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006), although a friend's knowledge of domestic violence and the social resources available may be limited and accessing the correct agencies may prove difficult.

It is well documented that many women experiencing domestic violence approach informal networks as a means of emotional support, protection, advice or a sympathetic ear (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Liang et al, 2005; Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2000, 2006). However, family and friends may be unaware of the complexity

of domestic violence and advice may not always be helpful as discussed. Having someone to talk to and listen may be important to a woman experiencing abuse but this will not challenge the behaviour of the perpetrator or the risk of further abuse.

Whilst informal support networks are important to survivors of domestic violence, formal agencies are imperative in offering practical and legal support (Liang et al, 2005; Leone et al, 2007). However, it is illustrated in the literature that most women seek intervention from a formal agency when the situation has reached crisis point (Harne and Radford, 2008; Liang et al, 2005; Moe, 2007; Postmus, et al, 2009; Wilcox, 2006). It was this response that government impetus responded to through the co-ordinated multi-agency approach, for example through MARAC to ensure the safety of women and children (Home Office, 2003).

It is suggested women experiencing domestic violence have differing needs of support requiring intervention from varying social agencies (Dunne, 2002; Fugate et al, 2005; Leone et al, 2007; Liang et al, 2005; Postmus, et al, 2009). Survivors ending an abusive relationship may require long-term support emotionally, legally, financially, with housing needs and security from individual specialist agencies (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Hague & Malos, 2005; Wilcox, 2006). Liang et al, (2005) amongst others argue however, that it is only when informal sources become inadequate or they are concerned for their safety that women approach formal agencies. Liang et al, (2005:72) also found that:

When the violence reaches a certain level of severity,
and even the support of the family and friends may be

insufficient to prevent or stop it happening, social support is utilised.

The focus of the co-ordinated approach through government policy and practice was to respond to the many needs of survivors by bringing all the agencies into one room to ensure a more effective response (Home Office, 1999; 2003; 2005; 2009). In spite of this, women can still feel 'entrapped in abusive relationships' (Moe 2007:676). When help is sought most favour the informal network first as a form of support to the abuse.

However, as Fox et al, (2001) argue, people respond to problems depending upon how they define that problem. This suggests that if an incident is not defined or seen as serious then women will not seek help. This links back to the discourse of definition (section 2.4) in that behaviours have to be recognised and named for the process of help-seeking to begin. As Liang et al, (2005) have identified, eventually due to the intensity of violence women do seek a route to formal support. It is illustrated in the help-seeking literature however, that women also:

Consider the potential cost of help-seeking that may arise from making their abuse public, including the loss of privacy, stigmatisation, and the threats on their lives made by abusive partners (Goodkind et al, 2003:78).

Leone et al, (2005) argue that services must ensure they meet the needs of survivors and understand the diverse needs of women. This discourse relates to the types of violence as identified by Johnson (1995, 2008) and the differing needs that

the violence types present. However, Leone et al (2005) go on to argue for a needs-based model of intervention suggesting a person-centred approach that takes the short-term as well as long-term needs into account for both low-level and high risk violence. The literature identifies however, that when women do seek support they did not always find it helpful (Fugate et al, 2005; Humphreys and Thiara, 2003; Postmus, et al, 2009). For example, mental health providers concentrated on their mental health rather than the abuse or they experienced disbelief or blaming attitudes (Humphreys and Thiara, 2003). The data suggests that, unknowingly the services offering the specialist support may be implementing barriers.

The focus for formal intervention in response to domestic violence within the UK has tended to be in relation to heterosexual relationships and geared towards women who are at high risk, such as the MARACs as discussed in section 2.3. It is argued that there is a link between informal and formal networks and the emphasis on community intervention has unintentionally augmented the dichotomy of the public/private (Wilcox, 2006). Kelly (1996) notes it is ironic, considering the original aims and thinking of the women's movement on community support:

The separation of formal and informal support has hidden the extent to which both aspects of support intersect with each other (Wilcox, 2006:64).

However, multi-agency intervention that is established nationwide (Hague, 1997:96) was introduced as a means of reducing domestic violence by New Labour (see section, 2.3). However, whilst much was implemented in response to domestic

violence by the government and supporting bodies, but as discussed women still feel trapped within abusive relationships (Moe, 2007) and many women still fail to seek help in response to domestic violence.

It is apparent there is a serious under-reporting of domestic violence (Home Office, 2011; Women's Aid, 2009) and its tendency to remain hidden within the private sphere, with many women not coming to the attention of the services at all. Victimisation surveys identify there are hidden figures of crime, and researchers recognise recorded figures to be greatly under represented (Mooney, 2000). Informal spaces such as drop-ins are needed to encourage women to talk informally without feeling the relationship has to end or that criminal intervention will be implemented, as Wilcox (2006:734) suggests:

Further exploration of the possibilities of opening up additional spaces within communities where women can find company, support and safety is needed.

Further awareness of support services available within local communities invariably needs impetus through local publicity campaigns. Mooney (2000) identifies through research that very few survivors opted to inform the police or contact a specialist agency. However, she does not provide the answer but, along with other researchers have suggested that fear of the stigma that is attached to a survivor of domestic violence, a belief in keeping the family together, the struggle to speak of their experiences and isolation or homelessness all contribute to the silence/privacy surrounding domestic violence (Hague and Malos, 2005; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox,

2006). It could also be that women are unclear that what they are experiencing is domestic violence (Walby and Allen, 2004), and are unaware of the help and resources available to them locally.

The following section brings to the fore a gap that has been identified in the current literature, which requires attention, as this may have a direct impact on potential help-seeking.

2.8 Identifiable Gap In Research

As discussed, domestic violence has attracted much research and continues to be a prominent focus for feminist academics, women's organisations and government. The majority of research has focused on that of past or present service users collating narratives that have enabled an understanding of domestic violence, and the services needed to provide support and safety where appropriate. As recognised throughout the literature, an accurate incidence of domestic violence is immeasurable as many cases remain hidden in the privacy of the home (Mooney, 2000; Smith, 1989; Wilcox, 2006). This is an area of which is in need of address.

The existing literature appears to present little focus on the understanding of domestic violence by all women in society, and how this may impact on their potential for help-seeking. As Smith (1989) and others have argued, how domestic violence is defined should be the first to be explored in research responding to

domestic violence. Literature in relation to active help-seeking has been published, but it has focussed on survivor's help-seeking behaviour (see Fugate et al, 2005; Liang et al, 2005; Leone et al, 2007; Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). This suggests that the literature does not account for what could be potential service users, and their knowledge of active help-seeking.

Thus far, there is an identifiable gap in the literature in relation to domestic violence and help-seeking, and how potential service users might come into contact with information, and resources that could enable them to make changes to their situation. It is well documented that research into informal networks is inadequate even though it is recognised as the primary route, and for some women, the only route to help seeking. The government clearly advocates early intervention with policy emphasis on protection and prevention but, to ensure a successful early intervention, help-seeking advice and information needs to be readily accessible and available to everybody. Research in this area would enable an exploration of the knowledge women have, regardless of experience, of domestic violence and help-seeking intervention. Therefore, ensuring policy and practice on how help-seeking information educates all in society is adequate.

2.9 Summary

Through ongoing feminist activism and research there has been a much improved response to domestic violence in recent decades. Domestic violence is

acknowledged as a social problem and as a crime, with women entitled to protection from violence in the private sphere. New Labour gave impetus to domestic violence when they came to power in 1997, and implemented policies to reflect change to service provision and criminal justice responses. This focus was on a co-ordinated approach to ensure effective practice at a local level. However, that focus appears to be at a high level of risk and survivors experiencing low-level abuse appear to be missed.

Evident in the literature is that many women do not seek a route-to-help at all, and much domestic violence is going unrecognised, which can become normalised within the heterosexual relationship. It is well documented that domestic violence is on the whole associated with physical and sexual violence influenced by what is identified as the 'public story' (Donovan and Hester, 2010:1). The discourse suggests this is influenced through the narrow definition by the government, which is reflective of the legal framework that criminalises physical and sexual violence and prioritises formal intervention. However, in terms of sexual abuse, the normalisation of gendered roles and expectations is blurring the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable sexual violations within the heterosexual relationship, thus preventing a pathway to help-seeking.

Love has, until very recently, received minimal attention in understandings of domestic violence. Donovan and Hester (2010) argue love needs to be included within understandings of emotional abuse. Coercive control is recognised as a major form of emotional abuse, and Stark (2007, 2012) argues this dominance is

pursued by men to entrap women so they can get their own way. Stark (2007) illustrates a manipulative process through power and control in the pursuit of patriarchal domination. However, understandings of financial abuse had not received the same in-depth attention until very recently (Wilcox, 2006).

In the UK, some behaviours associated to domestic violence has been recognised as a crime since the 1990s (Harne and Radford, 2008). However, violence in the intimate relationship does not appear to be accredited with the same response as a stranger assault. This is argued to be a result of a failure to implement appropriate domestic violence legislation that reflects its intricacy (Harne and Radford, 2008), which may impact on why women do not seek help. What is apparent in the literature is that domestic violence provides a backdrop, which enables men to uphold and impose conventional relationships, and what they presume are constitutional rights (Stark, 2007; Weiss, 2009; Wilcox, 2006). The home is recognised as the most perilous place for women of being at risk of physical abuse, rape, sexual assault and murder that can instil fear that remains hidden and also prevents help-seeking.

Existing research identifies that informal networks are the preferred pathway to help-seeking by women and the only route for some (see Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Moe, 2007). However, family and friends may be unaware of the complexity of domestic violence and advice may not always be helpful, as discussed. Having someone to talk to and listen may be important to a woman experiencing abuse but this will not challenge the behaviour of the perpetrator or prevent further abuse.

Whilst informal support networks are important to survivors of domestic violence formal agencies are imperative in offering practical and legal support (Liang et al, 2005; Leone et al, 2007). However, it is illustrated in the literature that most women only seek intervention from a formal agency when the situation has reached crisis point (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Harne and Radford, 2008; Liang et al, 2005; Moe, 2007; Postmus et al, 2009).

The following chapter focuses on the methodology which is concerned with the framework and the procedures that were applied to gathering the knowledge in this research.

Chapter Three

Methodological Approach

This chapter is concerned with the methodological framework and the procedures that were applied to gathering knowledge in this research. It seeks to set out how, in practice, the research was approached and how the evidence was assessed. While no single feminist method informs feminist research, many lenses are used to raise awareness of injustices experienced by women. However, one distinct feature of feminist methodology is that it is informed by feminist theory as discussed in chapter two, and for example:

It is politically for women; feminist knowledge has some grounding in women's experiences, and how it feels to live in an unjust gendered relationship (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002:16).

Feminist standpoint has influenced and shaped this work (see Harding, 1987 1991, 2004; Haraway, 2004; Hartsock, 1998). Standpoint is a distinctive philosophy of knowledge that challenges researchers to understand individual social realities and, then apply that knowledge to bring about change (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). However, it is not without criticism (see section 3.3). Nevertheless, to achieve this distinctive methodological approach, it necessitates the combination of both knowledge and practice to build understanding, which ultimately presents the requirement of action through consciousness-raising (see Hughes, 2002; Stanley and Wise, 1983, 1993). Therefore, in this work, standpoint epistemology essentially

allows for a narrative on the social and cultural experiences of women in relation to domestic violence to be reinterpreted and told, thus enabling the voices of women to be listened to and heard (Harding, 1987; Hartsock, 1998; Letherby, 2003). For example:

Those who support this approach argue that experience should be the starting point for any knowledge production and insist on the need to investigate and theorise the social world from the perspective of women (Letherby, 2003:44).

This thesis is to explore and examine the knowledge women have about help-seeking intervention in response to domestic violence, in order to promote social justice, and to bring about change in relation to domestic violence.

Firstly, there will be an explanation of the identification of the area of research and aims of the project, then the ethical considerations that were needed to be completed prior to the commencement of any fieldwork. There will follow a discussion of the epistemological approach, feminist standpoint that shaped this work, and the new conceptual framework that has been termed an 'ontological transition'. The rest of the chapter will focus on the research design, which includes the mixed method approach, use of a research journal, the inclusion of the definition of domestic violence, and the problems encountered. Then there will be a discussion of the quantitative design, which includes the sample, questionnaire design, pilot study, data management using SPSS and the findings. Following this will be a discussion of the qualitative phase including the specificity of the sample,

the interview design and process, data management through the use of thematic analysis. Lastly, but importantly, the significance of the research and the field work processes including the impact of emotional engagement, and the practice of reflexivity in the field work will be explained.

3.1 Identification and Aims of the Project

Identification of this research study, as discussed in chapter one, arose as a result of my own previous academic studies, and personal and professional experiences. The literature search revealed that women in society who are not visible to agencies responding to domestic violence had been largely excluded from research. As chapter two highlights, much of the current research in relation to domestic violence has focussed on the knowledge of survivors of domestic violence. Therefore, this research is '*An exploration of the knowledge women in Sunderland have of help-seeking in response to domestic violence*' as set out in chapter one.

The choice of the City of Sunderland as the site for this study was influenced by two main factors. Firstly, both my professional and academic experiences presented access to support agencies in the City, which it was believed would be beneficial for the advertising and recruitment of the survey. Sunderland had also adopted the domestic violence forum structure, which was typical of other cities. Secondly, but as importantly, Sunderland is estimated to be home to a population of approximately 283,500 (ONS, 2011) making it the largest city in the region (Clayton and

MacDonald, et al, 2014), and one of the larger cities nationally (see UK Cities, 2014). This urbanised environment presented the opportunity to generate data from a diverse range of women, which could be seen as representative of the broader population (Hesse-Biber and Leavey, 2007).

The aims of this thesis are to explore and examine the knowledge women in Sunderland have about:

1. Help-seeking in response to domestic violence,
2. What formal and informal networks would be utilised if necessary
3. What women in Sunderland know about the local services available to them in response to domestic violence.

To accomplish those aims, an exploration of the available literature about domestic violence enabled the identification of further individual aims (below) that needed to be explored and examined. This included:

- An evaluation of the definition of domestic violence to see if it is problematic, thus impacting on help-seeking.
- An evaluation of the level of awareness women have about help-seeking intervention services.
- The examination of the secrecy and/or silence surrounding domestic violence and an exploration of whether this discourse has a direct impact on women seeking intervention, thus contributing to the difficulties of help-seeking.
- An exploration to identify and highlight barriers that prevent help-seeking information being readily accessible.
- The aims engaged with the debates regarding the policy and practice of agencies responding to domestic violence.

As the overall aim of this thesis is to explore and examine the knowledge of women about help-seeking in response to domestic violence, the research as mentioned above, has been shaped through the influences of feminist standpoint, of which will be discussed further in this chapter (see section 3.3). However, prior to any fieldwork, ethical consideration had to be given to this research and the process of obtaining ethical approval is discussed in the following section.

3.2 Ethical Consideration

Prior to the commencement of any data collation, ethical approval was sought from the University of Sunderland's Ethics Committee. The process of ethical approval was adhered to as stipulated by the University. The application for, *Ethical Approval For Work With Human Participants*' (see appendix, 3) was completed, and submitted with draft copies of the online questionnaire (see appendix, 4), a draft of questions for the qualitative phase (see appendix, 5), the information sheet (see appendix, 6) and consent information (see appendix, 7) for respondents for assessment by the ethics committee. As a social researcher, it is important to be aware of legislation in the United Kingdom regarding the collation of personal data (Denscombe, 2007). However, as this research is under the auspices of the University, there is no need for the research to be registered on a public register (Denscombe, 2007). However, Sin (2005:278) argues:

It is not sufficient to assume that simply because ethical approval has been sought and granted, or that research is being conducted within the auspices of an

organisation with a clear code of ethics, that a research project will have satisfied all the requirements of ethical research.

However, as a researcher and professional, I am aware some small-scale research may be exempt from certain regulatory conditions, but it is good practice to adhere accordingly to both institutional guidelines, and the law on data protection. For example, respondents' who participated in the qualitative phase were given an alias in an attempt to protect their identity, and all recorded data was deleted once the transcription was completed. The transcripts that are stored on a computer and external hard drive are password protected, and all hard copies were stored in a locked filing cabinet within the university, then shredded after use.

Increasingly in recent years, ethical issues surrounding social research have become more prominent and more so when dealing with such sensitive issues as domestic violence. Using the internet as a means of data collection does raise specific ethical issues for both the researcher and the researched and, as such, are only just beginning to be discussed (Bryman 2008). Thus, any possible ethical issues that could be prevented had to be identified and addressed. For instance: a web based survey design was used rather than the use of personal email, the questionnaires were anonymous, unless the respondent opted to participate in the qualitative phase. In addition, as discussed above, the data stored on the computer and an external hard drive has been password protected and hard copies were shredded after use, or stored in a locked filing cabinet within the university.

Feminist research is committed to producing knowledge that will enhance the lives of women and children through social and individual change (Letherby, 2003). This philosophy informs the focus of this work, and the field work was carried out with the welfare of both the researcher and the researched at the fore. Participation in this research was entirely voluntary with clear explanations as to what the research was about given at the beginning of the on-line survey, and prior to qualitative interviews with fully informed consent.

In light of this potential respondents were made aware of their right to refuse to participate, or withdraw at any point, in an attempt to protect the welfare of each respondent (Corti et al, 2000). Respondents were advised that their anonymity and confidentiality would be upheld to the best of my ability, unless they instructed differently. As a researcher, I was aware I may have to deal with the 'politics of disclosure' (Renzetti and Lee, 1993), for example, making a decision on what data should be or should not be disclosed. Therefore, while I was aware participants would have given informed consent for the data to be used, at the end of each qualitative interview I reiterated their right to withdraw at any point, or withdraw any data they did not want to be disclosed. Ethical considerations are an ongoing part of the research process (Miller and Bell, 2002) and consideration should be given 'before, during and after the research' (Sin, 2005:281).

Domestic violence is a sensitive issue and one that has the possibility of inflicting emotional harm both upon the respondent and the researcher (Holmes, 2010). As Sin (2005) argues, participating in research that reflects on lived experiences may

cause some respondents to feel upset. Although, this research is not focussed on survivors of domestic violence, it is apparent that respondents may suddenly associate certain behaviours occurring in a personal relationship with domestic violence. The welfare of respondents was paramount and every precaution was taken to minimise the occurrence of any distress. Being aware of this, and the sensitivity of domestic violence, a list of support agencies was attached to the questionnaire for respondents, and a hand-out was given to respondents of the semi-structured interviews.

Additionally, the safety and well-being of the researcher has to be considered (Holmes, 2010). Therefore, a risk assessment must be completed prior to each interview, more so interviews that take place within the home of a respondent. With this in mind the date, time and place of each interview were considered with the supervisory team. Then prior to each interview, a call was made to one of the supervisory team confirming; my location, time of commencement, and a call to confirm I had left the interview site. However, if no contact had been made with the supervisory team after sixty minutes then, I was to be contacted by a team member. Once ethical approval was successful the focus moved to the structure of the fieldwork, through the epistemological approach, feminist standpoint that shaped this work.

3.3 Epistemological Approach: Feminist Standpoint

Methodological approaches informed by feminist standpoint places the lives of women at the centre of research. Standpoint logic is to start research from the lives of women and marginalised groups, but essentially it is a logic that acknowledges and recognises multiple variations in the lives of women (Harding, 2004:134):

It has started off from many different women's lives;
there is no typical or essential woman's life from which
feminists start their thought.

Standpoint epistemology offers a framework for gathering knowledge on the histories and ideologies of individual women's everyday lives (Harding, 2004). Standpoint strives for the world to be seen as it is with all covers removed so that nothing is obscured. Standpoint feminists argue this is achieved by attempting to position both the researcher and the researched 'on the same critical plane' (Harding, 1987, 2004), to challenge the power imbalance. This approach attempts to remove the inequalities around race, class, gender, ethnicity and sexuality, which all shape the society in which we live. While there may not be 'common experiences' with all respondents, a commonality is we are women, and we live in a patriarchal society, and we can understand where we are with each other. This visibility through shared experiences, or what is termed inter-subjective realities (Weskott, 1983), is important to how the researcher is positioned, and accepted in the fieldwork to enable the gleaning of in-depth knowledge. As women, inter-subjectivity allows a comparison of shared experiences through reflexivity, which enables us to recognise others through the 'common experience' (Harding, 2004).

As Ramazanoglu & Holland, (2002:16) insist:

Logically, feminist methodology cannot be independent of the ontology, epistemology, subjectivity, politics, ethics and social situation of the researcher.

This epistemological approach that is 'seen to have arisen through consciousness-raising activities' (Hughes, 2002:153) links to ontology; it accepts differing beliefs, ideals, values and thoughts of both the researcher and the researched. This enables the relationship between the researcher and the researched to be explored democratically, by understanding difference and common experiences, and facilitate the narratives of the respondents to be told.

Feminist standpoint in this research has enabled a way of understanding how individual women experience life, by giving a lens through which we can begin to understand, and make sense of individual knowledge. This resonates strongly with current standpoint research as it has enabled women to voice personal knowledge and experiences, which otherwise would have not been heard (see Harding, 2004). However, it also presents the opportunity to build on feminist standpoint understandings about the process of consciousness-raising.

Standpoint epistemology embraces ontology, which enables a person to reflect and challenge their own lived experiences (see section 3.4). Through the process of the interview some respondents began to question and challenge their lived realities. It could be argued that this is a form of conscious-raising (see Bartky, 1977; Stanley

and Wise, 1983, 1993). Consciousness-raising in the feminist context is a consensual process opted into by women in a group sharing experiences and coming to a different understanding of those experiences as a result (Hesse-Biber and Leavey, 2007; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Wheeler-Brooks, 2009). However, as part of the wider debate Stanley and Wise (1993) point out that consciousness-raising not only occurs in small formal groups but also informally between women. Indeed, women have an individual and unique view of their world and their lived realities are not the same for all women. This suggests consciousness is individual and any change to that consciousness may challenge an individual's ontology.

The interviewees in this study were not in a group context and nor did I share my personal experiences equally with the respondents as this was not the purpose of this work. However, throughout the interview I was sympathetic and empathetic, which may have enabled them to come to a different understanding and thus raise their consciousness. Through the interview process respondents began to become more aware of how they had understood their lived realities. For example, some respondents began to challenge what they had believed was their true lived reality or understanding (see Giddens, 1987) and this change in awareness brought a challenge to their ontology, thus resulting in what I have termed an 'ontological transition' (see section 3.4). As this development did not include the process of feminist consciousness-raising the more appropriate term to use was that of an 'ontological transition'.

As a feminist who is passionate about improving the lives of women, standpoint has allowed me to give a voice to the respondents in this research, allowing their narrative to be heard and understood. The positioning of women in society ultimately shapes their knowledge; it is the women who are experts in their own lives. This is identified by Haraway (2004:127) as 'socially situated knowledge'. To achieve this is to begin with the lives of the women and listen to the difficulties of their everyday life (Haraway, 2004; Harding, 1987, 2004; Hartsock, 1998). From this emerges a collective of authentic dialogue, thus producing knowledge.

Essentially, standpoint has allowed me to immerse myself in the research process making me as the researcher visible (Edwards, 1993). How I was positioned in the field work would have a direct impact on my relationship with the respondents (section 3.13), and the level of in-depth narrative that would be shared (Harding, 1987, 2004). Harding (1987) insists, there is a need for the researcher to challenge the power imbalance, in an attempt to remove the invisibility of the researcher, and define the relationship between the 'subject and object'. Stanley and Wise (1993) argue, by exploring relationships that exist between the 'subject' and the 'object' of the research this strengthens the existence and understanding of shared experiences, or what Weskott (1983) defined as 'inter-subjective realities'. Standpoint theorists insist that recognising the existence of shared experiences in the field attempts to challenge the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched (Harding, 1987, 2004; Hartstock, 1998; Stanley and Wise, 1993) thus facilitated through consciousness-raising. Therefore, the positioning of myself in the

field by acknowledging shared experiences, was influenced through my own standpoint.

My standpoint as a white, working-class woman, feminist, researcher and professional in a supporting role for survivors of domestic violence, is underpinned and given impetus through personal experience of domestic violence. This lived reality influenced the emergence of 'inter-subjective realities' in the field. For example, during the fieldwork, it became evident that respondents who had experiences of domestic violence (experiential group) questioned my reasoning for the area of research I had chosen at the onset. Prior to the interview process, during introduction, I briefly shared some my personal and professional experiences of domestic violence with the respondents, which enabled common experiences to emerge.

This process of positionality then allowed me to focus, and immerse myself in their realities, which removed a sense of difference, which ultimately challenged the power imbalance. This appeared to give the respondents the strength and comfort to reinterpret and share lived experiences that had never been disclosed previously (see Freire, 1970: Wheeler-Brooks, 2009). However, for some respondents this process was highly emotive as they relived experiences that for some were still raw (see section 3.12). The respondents through inter-subjective realities assumed I understood their depth of anguish and experiences, which appeared to enable a more relaxed relationship. Following the highly emotive interviews I stayed after the interview process to ensure the well-being of the respondent (see section 3.12).

Respondents with no direct experience of domestic violence, but working within professional bodies (institutional group), accepted my positioning as an academic, but also questioned how I came to study this specific area. I shared my professional background in front line statutory service provision and this again enabled some common experiences to emerge. This process at the introduction influenced my positioning for the interview process, which appeared to give the respondents the confidence to freely discuss individual work ethic and practices, as well as personal experiences of domestic violence. However, some of the interviews were emotionalised through a form of consciousness-raising (see pg:94) that occurred during the interview process (see section 3.12).

Finally, those with no experience of domestic violence either personally or professionally (notional group) did not question the reason for the research. Therefore how I became positioned in each interview varied with the respondent, their depth of knowledge and interest in the subject. The notional group included the oldest and youngest members of the sample and the relationship between myself and the respondent varied between the age groups. The older members were welcoming, more relaxed and open from the start expressing their concerns that they had little knowledge of domestic violence. The younger respondents were initially tense and limited in their conversation. However, as the interviews progressed the interviews became more informal and relaxed, which appeared to challenge some of the power imbalance. This process of reason influenced how I was positioned in each interview and, upon reflection, how I was able to immerse myself in their realities in an attempt to remove some of the power imbalance.

Reflexivity has been at the heart of the research process, and in the fieldwork reflexive practice was constant. The practice of reflexivity allows us to understand the importance of the social location of the researcher (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003), and how we may affect others through self-reflection that unconsciously we were before unaware of. For instance:

Reflexivity is the process through which a researcher recognises, examines, and understands how his or her own social background and assumptions can intervene in the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2007:129).

One important element of reflexivity is for researchers to situate themselves both socially and emotionally, therefore, a researcher's personal biography must be considered prior to the analysis of the data (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). However, Holmes (2010) argues the 'emotional component' of reflexivity is an ongoing process that is evident in all aspects of research. It helps us understand how, as researchers, we construct theoretical frameworks that ultimately offer explanations of the world around us. It enables researchers to be both a 'product and creator' (O'Leary, 2007) of the social world under investigation. As Harding (2004) argues reflexivity should be acknowledged as a source within the research process, rather than a problem.

Feminist standpoint embraces reflexivity in an attempt to challenge and recognise the power imbalance within the research process. The researcher, as discussed above, is encouraged to critically reflect on their own standpoint to make them aware of their positionality and differences in the research process. However,

Stanley and Wise (1983:159) point out that research is 'grounded in consciousness' recognising that the researcher cannot be separated from this process, nor any situation that may arise in the fieldwork. Reflexivity, being at the heart of the fieldwork process exposes the researcher to the sensitivity of the situational dynamics as they occur (Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002). How reflexivity was approached in this study presents the opportunity to critique and build on standpoint theoretical understandings of reflexivity.

However, while feminist standpoint embraces the practice of reflexivity and provides theoretical discussions of similarities and difference within, for example, gender, sexuality or class standpoint offers little discussion around the emotionalisation (see Holmes, 2010) that can occur during the reflexive process. Reflexivity in this study empowered the research process through the acknowledgment of common experiences, which opened up dialogue through a form of consciousness-raising. As respondents reflected on their relationships the sensitivity of some brought a depth of emotion. This altered the situational dynamics of the fieldwork and as a researcher I had to react to the situation in ensuring minimal harm to the respondent.

Standpoint, as discussed, clearly acknowledges the positioning of the researcher within the whole research process. The process of positionality encouraged by standpoint theorists relies on the relationship between the researcher and the researched (see Haraway, 2004; Harding, 1987, 2004; Hartsock, 1998). This resonates strongly on interaction through intersubjectivity and the grounding of

common experiences. However, while standpoint encourages this positioning and recognises the situational dynamics that may occur during the research process, it does not appear to offer a discussion in how to deal with the sensitivity and emotionalisation of the reflexive process.

Reflexivity, as Holmes (2010) argues, is more than simply reflection of historically lived experiences, it also includes the emotions of those experiences whether happy or sad for both the researched and the researcher. Holmes (2010:147) insists:

Emotions are core to reflexive processes and reflexivity can be complex in that it moves researchers to reflect on their own lived relationships and experiences.

Therefore, dealing with personal biographies as pointed out above by Mauthner and Doucet (2003) and taking a 'critical look inwards' (Hertz, 1997) prior to the fieldwork process is vital. However, while I accepted and understood the complexities of reflexive practice there was still a degree of emotional exhaustion experienced during highly emotive interviews, which was an ongoing process throughout transcription. As Stanley and Wise (1983) point out, the self cannot be left out of the reflexive process and the impact consciousness raising may have during that process.

Reflexivity as discussed requires the researcher to situate themselves both physically and emotionally throughout the research process. As identified at the onset researching violence against women is an emotive issue that can impact on

both the researcher and the researched during qualitative research in the field (see Holmes, 2010: Mauther and Doucet, 2003). Indeed, feminist researchers highlight that there is a high risk of the researcher suffering emotional pain, being overwhelmed or experiencing flashbacks to personal associations of abuse (see Kelly, 1988, Renzetti & Lee, 1993 and Stanko, 1997. Ramazanoglu & Holland (2007:148) argue;

All researchers, however, inexperienced carry intellectual, emotional and political baggage with them.

Emotion is evident in every aspect of sensitive/subjective research and we might ask would we be human if we did not feel another's pain? Holmes (2010:139) has brought to the fore that there is much academic discussion surrounding reflexivity; however, attention to the 'emotionalisation of reflexivity' is largely missed from reflexive and standpoint theoretical explanations. She argues that definitions of reflexivity need to incorporate not only reflection, but the practices and emotions encompassed in reflexive practice. The impact of the depth of emotion being felt by the respondents was influenced through the process of reinterpretation and reflection on their life experiences, and by myself during the interview process and transcription.

Through a form of consciousness-raising, and the reflexive practice of both the fieldwork and narrative, I developed my own theoretical framework, which is best expressed through the term that emerged as an important conceptual development, and I coined as an 'ontological transition'.

3.4 Ontological Transitions

I took to the field the researcher self (Renzetti and Lee, 1993), an academic, and a student with a focus on collating in-depth narratives about my topic. There was the 'situated self' (Renzetti and Lee, 1993) immersing myself in the process with a focus on how I positioned myself, becoming visible and being passionate in what I was doing. The 'other selves' (Renzetti and Lee, 1993), included personal experiences of my life, of which some were acknowledged through the practice of shared experiences. The sample also brought with them their 'other selves' (Renzetti and Lee, 1993) through being part of the research they were a respondent, the respondents had personal experiences of their life, such as being a mother, wife/partner, daughter, friend, and for some personal experiences of domestic violence.

During the interview process the respondents 'situated self' began to evolve, revealing personal experiences of how they understood and made sense of the world, and their individual social realities. Upon reflection of their experiences the respondents, through a raised awareness became more aware of how they had understood their lived realities. For example, through the interview process some respondents began to question what they had believed was their true knowledge (see Giddens, 1987) and through this awareness challenged consciousness. As Wheeler-Brooks (2009:132) points out, 'critical consciousness gives a person agency and an ability to recognise and change their lives'.

Through a form of consciousness-raising for example, as personal experiences were reconfigured, the respondents began to challenge oppression that had been previously internalised (Hughes, 2002; Wheeler-Brooks, 2009). Therefore, through individual recognition of behaviour that was previously acknowledged as personal fault or shame, part of their role, or what had become normalised in their relationships was able to be challenged as unacceptable or aberrant. This process of change in consciousness or knowledge influenced empowerment, thus enabling the respondents to challenge or overcome the oppression they had experienced.

As my feminist consciousness broadened in the field the 'situated self' was challenged (see Hughes, 2002; Stanley and Wise, 1993) and this process allowed me to take a 'critical look inward' (see Hertz 1997) and reflect on the fieldwork experiences of not only myself as a researcher but also the researched (Holmes 2010). For example, through me as a researcher immersing my 'situated self' in the fieldwork, I began to learn about and feel individual isolation, hurt, personal fault, emotional turmoil and anxiety widening my level of consciousness. This impacted through points of individual reflection on the respondent's own reconfiguration of their lived realities from which a new standpoint began to occur, through what I have termed an 'ontological transition'.

Individual depths of emotion and pain varied; for some respondents, it was still raw and they relived and spoke of personal experiences for the first time, some disclosing horrendous sexual and physical violence they had never disclosed previously. This disclosure took some respondents on what, at that point, was an

emotional rollercoaster, but as their awareness was raised this was viewed as a positive action by those respondents (see below and section 3.12). The respondents felt able to acknowledge and emotionally express the fault, pain and anxiety they had been living with, which for some was years, without feeling judged. The respondents gave their narrative reliving and reflecting on those personal and horrendous experiences, which challenged their awareness of their lived realities.

It was clear that individual experiences had been given voice, listened too and heard. For those respondents, at the end of the interview process, expressed relief as they had handed over the emotional load and blame they had carried. A raised awareness had brought a sense of empowerment and a change to their lived realities. For those respondents, the 'ontological transition' was a positive one as it transpired that having handed over the experiences they could move on with their lives, leaving me to deal with the narrative and depth of the emotional load. Indeed, Weitz (1982) found that through research consciousness-raising can help women as it widens their level of knowledge giving them a sense of control.

However, for other respondents there was a realisation that their relationships were not as loving, caring and as honest as they thought, and now the ontological transition was that their reality needed to be changed, but how? This raised awareness appeared to be equally overwhelming and empowering. It placed a sense of responsibility on the respondents to challenge their current situation, but also gave them the opportunity to change it (see Wheeler-Brooks (2009). Many respondents' ontologies were challenged and questioned through the interview

process, and upon reflection of that process, a transition took place. The experience of emotional engagement and 'ontological transition' was individual and personal, which varied among respondents. The impact of emotional engagement and ontological pain felt was individual and personal to individually lived experiences, with the depth varying among respondents.

Reflexive practice of the fieldwork process brought to the fore the 'ontological transitions' experienced by the respondents, but also myself, upon reflection of the fieldwork during transcription and analysis. This enabled me as a researcher to understand and acknowledge the impact of emotion in sensitive research, on both the researched and the researcher (Holmes, 2010). From the 'standpoint' of the researcher it is arguably an important concept in subjective research, and as researchers we must understand how the nature of the 'situated' encounter (Finlay, 2002), may impact on the fieldwork process.

3.5 Research Design: Mixed Method Approach

The method for this research needed to embrace not only the aims of the research question, but also be suitable to the epistemological approach. It is the researcher who must locate the most appropriate method at the onset of the research, to provide the tools that enable the knowledge to be collated, that will ultimately answer the research question. In my search for an appropriate method, I had to take into account that this research is aimed at women, regardless of their experience or

knowledge of domestic violence, and how I would recruit a wide variation of respondents.

Qualitative methods were the preferred approach, which supports my feminist standpoint. However, I was aware in order to 'cast the net' (Reinharz, 1992:201) as widely as possible I needed to combine methods in an attempt to include as large a sample of the female population in Sunderland as feasible, so a survey would help me achieve this. A quantitative approach would also enable background data to be collated to offer an understanding of the knowledge women have, regardless of experience, on help-seeking and domestic violence, to inform the qualitative phase. Therefore it was appropriate to this research that a mixed method approach (see Reinharz, 1992) was utilised to enable; recruitment and a more comprehensive account in the qualitative phase (Denscombe, 2010).

Feminist methodology employs many methods in order to learn about the lives of oppressed and marginalised groups (Letherby, 2003; Maynard & Purvis, 1994; Ramazanglou & Holland, 2007; Reinharz, 1992). As Reinharz (1992:197) notes:

By combining methods, feminist researchers are particularly able to illuminate previously unexamined or misunderstood experiences,

Given this was a new area of research, I needed to access the female population to obtain background knowledge of domestic violence, and their potential for help-seeking, and the opportunity to recruit women within society for the qualitative

phase. Therefore, combining methods would enable the recruitment of a wide age range of women in Sunderland, and the collation of extensive data on the lives, and knowledge the women in Sunderland have of domestic violence, and help-seeking intervention. As the aim of feminist research is to explore and understand the serious issues that affect women's lives, this flexible approach to the use of research methods is necessary (Letherby, 2003). This work however, is not intended to offer an empirical generalisation, but the purpose is to obtain in-depth knowledge from a broad as sample as possible.

Mixed method research designs set out by Morgan (1998) allow the researcher to choose a design that is of priority to the area under exploration. Hesse-Biber & Leavey (2007) suggest these designs are productive to feminist research as the secondary method can come first if it is to complement or inform the primary method. Therefore the approach employed for this research was a mixed method design by Morgan (2007:254) 'quant followed by QUAL⁵' data collection and analysis, as it enabled the quantitative (secondary) method to be used first to inform the qualitative (primary) method of in-depth data collation, and identify specific populations for inclusion in the qualitative phase. This design is suited to this research as the central purpose is not to obtain an empirical generalisation, but to recruit, and develop an in-depth understanding of the knowledge of women (England, 1993).

⁵ The lowercase means secondary method and all uppercase denotes the primary or main method (Morgan, 1998).

The quantitative method was only utilised to recruit a broad sample of respondents in the qualitative phase, and gather vital background knowledge, which would inform the qualitative phase. This included knowledge about how domestic violence was understood, and the knowledge the female population had about help-seeking interventions, which has largely been a gap in the research. The quantitative data was collated in the form of an on-line survey (see section 3.8.2). This allowed for the identification of specific populations to facilitate purposive sampling for the interview process, and inform the interview schedule in the qualitative phase (see section 3.9.2).

While quantitative methods are important in understanding the broad picture of the knowledge women in Sunderland have about domestic violence and help-seeking, it does not capture fully the lived experiences of women, and the in-depth authentic dialogue qualitative methods give. The background data that was collated through the on-line survey enabled not only the recruitment of specific populations of women, but provided an insight into the knowledge women have about help-seeking. This gave a basis for key findings to be addressed within twenty open semi-structured interviews in the qualitative phase. This allowed for the exploration of the key themes identified and the collation of more in-depth narratives of the subjective realities of women in Sunderland. However, in order to capture a snapshot of my experiences, and any issues that arose during the whole research process a research diary was kept from the onset.

Research Journal

The significant decision to keep a research journal was made in the preliminary stages of the research to note key literature, themes, meetings and ideas and, as Robson (2002:1) suggests:

It is good practice to keep a full and complete record of all the various activities with which you are involved in connection with the project.

This proved to be invaluable for numerous reasons. One, personal biographies are crucial in enabling reflection on thoughts, ideas, processes, methods, emotions and barriers of the whole research process. Another for the noting of things to do or change, and important points that were to be discussed with the supervisory team. In addition, it enabled the logging of my personal experiences and feelings of emotion throughout the research process, as well as those of the respondents during the fieldwork. It also proved valuable in the management of reflexive practice for example; the use of the diary captured conversation and actions prior to and following each interview, which could have been forgotten during those interviews that were often suffused with deep emotion.

It was an invaluable tool employed in the collation of biographical data during the period of debriefing following individual interviews. Following emotive interviews with some respondents, I stayed a while to give what Thompson (1988:211) calls 'a little of yourself' in ensuring their emotional well-being. This meant staying with some of

the respondents long after the interview had ended. While this process was troubling, painful and complex my focus was the respondents, and my thoughts and feelings of the process was written up in the journal after I had left the interview site. The journal was also useful for logging literature and current research references and upon reflexive practice of the themes from the literature search it brought to the fore the importance of the definition of domestic violence on help-seeking behaviour.

3.6 The inclusion of a statutory definition of domestic violence

Through both academic literature (see chapter two) and professional experience it is clear that the term 'domestic violence' is in itself problematic (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Hanmer and Itzin, et al, 2000; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). The non-recognition of domestic violence may be a contributing factor for explaining the apparent incalculable 'hidden abuse' and/or why many women fail to utilise help-seeking interventions (Harne & Radford, 2008; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). The term 'domestic violence' encompasses not only physical violence but sexual, financial, emotional and psychological abuse. It is apparent that people may associate this term with physical violence not recognising other forms of domestic violence or/and feel that some forms of abuse are not severe enough to seek help.

The ambiguity of the definition of domestic violence, as discussed in chapter two, emphasised a direct impact on this research. It raised the issue of whether or not a

person would recognise they were/are experiencing domestic violence and/or whether the severity/type of abuse they were/are experiencing warrants seeking help. It also questions how domestic violence intervention information is communicated too and, more importantly, understood by the general public. If people do not recognise behaviours associated with domestic violence, and are not aware of what advice and support is available to them, it is unlikely that they will be able to change their situation (Itzin, 2000; Mooney, 2000). Without the inclusion of a definition a true narrative would not be able to be sought on women's understandings of domestic violence, and their knowledge about help-seeking intervention in Sunderland. Reflecting upon this questions relating to definition were included in both the quantitative and qualitative phase, however, quantitative survey design is not straightforward and this proved an arduous task.

3.7 Problems encountered in survey design

As with most research unforeseen issues can arise throughout the research process, which have to be overcome. Undertaking sensitive research is a difficult process in itself, but one immediate challenge was how to talk about and phrase sensitive topics (Lee, 1993). The on-line questionnaire design in the quantitative phase was an arduous task, as approaching and gathering information on sensitive issues proved complex. The construction and layout of the questions was vital in ensuring participants understood what was being asked. Exploratory techniques

(see below) were employed prior to finalising the chosen format and tested in the pilot research.

At the onset, the on-line questionnaire (see appendix 8) was designed around problems within the family. This layout explored what individuals do when things go wrong within a family from matters related to: health, children, problem solving then lastly onto domestic violence. This approach was taken so that there was a focus on generalised help-seeking for family issues at the onset leaving more sensitive issues surrounding domestic violence towards the end, in the hope it would encourage completion and participation in the survey. It is well documented that participation in sensitive research is a difficult task and, given domestic violence is often hidden in the privacy and secrecy of the family (Harne & Radford, 2008; Ribbens & Edwards, 1998), I was searching for ways of capturing the target audience.

However, upon reflection, this layout failed to fully encompass the aims of the research and due to the number of questions it was too long. This presented the risk of what Bryman (2008:219) identified as 'respondent fatigue' when completing long questionnaires, making them rarely feasible as they fail to be completed. With this at the fore, and the fact questions asked should always be geared to answering the research question (Bryman, 2008), on consideration, this was not the case. Following much discussion with the supervisory team of the aims of the research, I

made a decision to change the format by approaching the issue of domestic violence from the onset.

A further questionnaire was constructed (see appendix 4), directly asking questions in relation to domestic violence and help-seeking. Problems arose in how to seek more responsive answers to closed questions, so the option of open questions was included to allow for respondents' opinions. Tables offering a choice of answers in relation to definition and behaviour were then included in the survey; although, this was not a straightforward procedure. Questions had to be designed in a way that respondents could understand and be able to answer but answers also had to be able to be coded and quantified (May, 2001). Following a pilot study (see section 3.8.3) the questionnaires were constructed to directly ask questions in relation to domestic violence and help-seeking interventions. A more in-depth discussion regarding the utilisation and format of the questionnaire follows in section 3.8.

It was also recognised that some members of society may be excluded due to limited or no access to a computer, or not being computer literate. In an attempt to overcome this exclusion, Age Concern and the Bangladeshi Centre, which are both located in Sunderland, were approached in an attempt to disseminate hard copies of the survey. Meetings were arranged with the 'gatekeepers' of the organisations to allow an explanation of the research. Ramazanoglu & Holland (2007) note it is the gatekeepers who have to understand the value and ethics of the research to permit

the researched to be reached. Both service providers did agree to hard copies of the survey being located in the reception areas for completion.

Obtaining access to run the on-line survey on web pages of selected service providers in the City initially proved relatively straightforward. A meeting was held with the coordinator of the Sunderland Domestic Violence Forum in August 2009 and following an explanation of the research study permission was immediately granted. Unfortunately, the co-ordinator left the post and attempts to contact another person within the department failed as the roles were being restructured. Contact was made with a voluntary agency, which supports women experiencing domestic violence in Sunderland, in September 2009 and permission was granted for the survey to be located on their homepage. However, Sunderland City Council eventually employed a replacement coordinator for the Domestic Violence Forum and contact was made in December 2009 resulting in permission to run the survey on the webpage.

3.8 Quantitative Approach

The quantitative phase, as discussed in section 3.5, was utilised as a secondary method (see Morgan, 1998). However, it was crucial to the research as it complemented and informed the qualitative phase. The quantitative phase was important as to the recruitment of a broad sample of respondents for the qualitative phase. Additionally, the production of knowledge that emerged from the analysis of

the quantitative data was vital in informing the key themes that were to be explored in the qualitative phase. The questions that made up the interview schedule in the qualitative phase were identified through the variables in the analysis of the quantitative data. The success in the design of the quantitative phase was paramount to the subsequent fieldwork in the primary phase. This section seeks to set out and explain the processes of the quantitative phase. It will include the sample, questionnaire design, pilot study, data management and analysis and the key findings.

The differing approaches to survey distribution were considered prior to the decision to utilise an on-line survey. Initially, the presumption was either to distribute the survey via service providers around the City or through the postal system. Using service providers was quickly dismissed as professional experience has proved it is all too easy for surveys to become lost within the abundance of literature they individually provide. A postal survey initially seemed the more appropriate method, but Bryman (2008), amongst others, highlight the risk of a low and sometimes slow response rate. The postal survey may also require a follow up letter, or even questionnaire for those who fail to respond, and this would prove a costly process. The alternative, low cost method was that of on-line research.

Since the 1990s on-line communication has flourished, which has enabled a new tool for the collation of social research (Robson, 2008). This has influenced the growth of both on-line email and web surveys and opting for this method removed

postal costs, which on a large scale can prove costly. For the purpose of this research, a web survey (questionnaire) was employed inviting respondents to complete it on-line. The web survey was favoured over the email survey as it is clear from the literature that many e-surveys are ignored or regarded as junk mail (see Bryman, 2008; Hewson et al, 2003; Sheenan & Hoy, 1999). Also, respondents may question anonymity through the use of their personal email addresses and fail to return the survey. Given the sensitive nature of this research, the web survey was more suited as it protected anonymity and, as Sheenan & Hoy (1999) suggest, it is more appropriate in reaching large groups of on-line users.

Another key factor for using the web survey was that Sunderland, in March 2006, was announced as the winner of the Government's Digital Challenge competition. One area which received great attention was the utilisation of internet access for many individuals and groups across Sunderland who were previously excluded (see Clayton, McDonald & Wilcock, 2011). This has greatly increased the number of on-line users allowing a diverse inclusion of the population in the City of Sunderland (Sunderland City Council, 2007). It was believed that a digitally enabled and inclusive city for both personal and professional use would only benefit the recruitment of respondents.

To enable the posting of the survey on-line, the paper format used in the pilot study had to be redesigned into that suitable for a webpage (see appendix 9). Due to my lack of expertise in this area, the services of a specialist technician from within the University was utilised. The majority of the survey was copied to the web design but

the answer choices were changed to radio buttons, text and drop down boxes to enable on-line responses. Once this was completed and tested, a link to the survey hosted by the University's central computer was issued to the participating service providers. This enabled the survey to be accessed by respondents on the relevant sites and, once completed, the data was collated on the central computer at the University ready for analysis.

Following the pilot study (see section 3.8.3) the questionnaire was made accessible via the website of Gentoo Group Sunderland from December 2009 until April 2010. Gentoo is the largest social and residential housing provider in the city. The Gentoo Group is diverse and consists of Gentoo Living, Gentoo Homes, Gentoo Ventures, Gentoo construction and Gentoo Sunderland. It was also made available on their staff intranet page. Utilising this service provider enabled the inclusion of a wide range of residents and professionals from around the city. The City of Sunderland Council ran the link for around four weeks over the Christmas period on their main homepage. A diverse range of people access the Council website for information and it was believed that this could only enhance inclusion. However, after the four weeks it was moved by the Council to the Sunderland Domestic Violence Forum website. A concern was that, on the whole, this is a forum for professional agencies responding to domestic violence and it may have had limited general public access.

While this research is not specifically related to experiences of domestic violence the chance to run the survey on the Wearside Women In Need Website provided a

great opportunity for recruitment. Survivors of domestic violence who have gained access in search of help and support will hold valuable knowledge about their journey of help-seeking. Also, websites of service providers are accessed by a broad range of people such as those seeking help, staff from other agencies, general interest and researchers amongst others. The service is the lead voluntary agency responding to domestic violence in Sunderland. However, the survey did not appear on the webpage until late January 2010 and ran until April 2010.

Following a slow response to the survey, a decision was made to encourage other sites to host the survey. In late February 2010, the University of Sunderland press office was contacted to determine if the survey could be posted on any of their many web pages. The University agreed to run it on the Fuse and AboutUS webpages both of which are media information sites. Staff, students and the general public can browse both sites allowing a diverse range of people access to the survey. The survey remained live from 2nd March 2010 until the end of April 2010. The Voluntary and Community Action Service Sunderland was also contacted in early March; however their web site was under construction. The agency suggested running an article highlighting the web address of the survey in newsletters and information sheets. This opportunity was taken to promote the survey to as wide an audience as possible in the hope of capturing a greater sample.

3.8.1. Specificity of the Sample

The nature of my research has influenced the sampling method. This research was solely interested in the knowledge of women about help-seeking in response to domestic violence. The survey attracted 179 respondents of which 30 were male. However, the male responses were removed upon analysis, as the focus of this work is on the female population in Sunderland as discussed in chapter one. The sampling frame came from the internet-user population and was made up of 'volunteer respondents' (see Hewson and Yule et al, 2003). As previously identified, the 'internet-user population is not representative of the population at large' (Hewson and Yule et al, 2003:30), so alternate approaches were included in an attempt to reach disengaged groups.

As discussed in section 3.7 Age Concern and the Bangladeshi Centre were approached in an attempt to ensure the sample was inclusive of a cross-section of respondents' and an inclusion of diversity. Twenty-five questionnaires with attached self-addressed envelopes were left at each location for dissemination. However, none were returned. This was not surprising as although both organisations principally agreed to the survey being in the reception areas of the centres, they were reluctant to engage with service users about the topic due to their sensitivity about domestic violence. Although I did explain the questionnaire design was about women's knowledge about domestic violence and help-seeking there were anxieties it would raise concern amongst service users of the organisations.

3.8.2. Questionnaire Design

To reiterate, the focus of this research is on women regardless of their experiences or knowledge of domestic violence. It is apparent from the literature search that this is a relatively new area of investigation and, with this in mind, a questionnaire was designed requesting both factual information and opinion (see appendix 9). It was then implemented in an effort to include as large a sample of the female population in Sunderland as feasible and enable a broad and more in-depth understanding of the knowledge women have on help-seeking and domestic violence.

Designing the questionnaire proved a difficult task (see section 3.7) and a process which took several months to complete. Approaching sensitive and personal issues is problematic in itself. However, identifying appropriate routes, questions and terminology in gathering the data proved laborious. Whilst the survey is one of the most common traditional tools used in social research (Bryman, 2008; Hewson et al, 2003; Robson, 2002) the on-line survey is a relatively new approach. Indeed, Hewson et al, (2003:78) has found:

There is very little published research on the factors that will influence respondents' responses in internet-administered surveys.

With this in mind, the questionnaire (see appendix 9) was designed around traditional formats with the utilisation of radio buttons, drop and text boxes to enable quick and easy answering of the questionnaire.

The term domestic violence was used in the survey as this is the most commonly used and understood terminology for this phenomena (see section 2.4). Itzin (2000) and Mooney (2000), amongst others, also argue domestic violence is commonly understood as the infliction of physical violence with many respondents failing to recognise financial, emotional, sexual or psychological abuse. In an attempt to gain an insight into this, the questions were as precise as they could be to ensure a clear understanding of what was being asked.

Section one of the questionnaire (see appendix 9) collected demographic data to ascertain age group, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, economic status, residency status and educational background of individual respondents. This was to allow both frequency charts and a bivariate analysis of the data, allowing any patterns to emerge within groups and importantly to locate the social class of respondents. In section two, personal relationships were explored. Information regarding current or previous relationships was explored in an attempt to identify any patterns in the knowledge individuals have about domestic violence and of help-seeking intervention.

Thirdly, respondents' understandings of the 'definition' of domestic violence were explored. This section allowed respondents to express what they thought domestic violence was, and questions relating to behaviours associated with domestic violence were asked. This gave respondents the option to highlight as to whether or not an act was recognised as domestic violence and indeed a crime. Much of the

research highlights the failure of women to report incidents of domestic violence to the police (Edwards, 2000; Hague & Malos, 2005; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). This could be influenced by the failure to recognise an act as domestic violence or as a crime.

The fourth section dealt with seeking help and whether informal or formal networks would be approached in the event that domestic violence was experienced. Questions were included to ascertain both whether respondents knew of formal help available in the area and how to access such agencies. Respondents were also asked to prioritise a list of informal and formal networks responding to domestic violence to ascertain in which order they would approach help and support. As Mooney (2000) and Wilcox (2006) have both found, informal networks are the preferred method of support however, this is known to sometimes have a negative outcome for survivors. Upon disclosure of domestic violence, respondents have found responses to be varied; some are supportive but some dismissive by family members and at times friends are lost as a result of their disbelief (Wilcox, 2006). Therefore, if a respondent answered no to seeking help, an option was given for them to explain why not from a list of common barriers or additionally they were given space to give other reasons for their choice.

Lastly, section five asked respondents' opinions as to whether or not enough services were available to support people experiencing domestic violence. Also explored was what they thought would be an effective way of supporting survivors

and whether the general public receive enough information regarding domestic violence. Respondents were also asked to suggest effective ways of 'raising awareness in society about the behaviour associated with domestic violence'. A further request for help was located at the end of the survey to enable respondents if they so wished to participate in the qualitative phase. The survey was also designed to fit the software package SPSS in order to ensure the analysis of the data. All completed surveys would be returned to the main University computer and then transferred to a spread sheet, which would then be forwarded by email to me for analysis. However, prior to the survey being posted online a pilot study was conducted.

3.8.3. Pilot Study

A pilot study of a self-completion questionnaire (appendix 4) that would reflect the on-line survey was conducted in October 2009, involving fifteen respondents who were both members of academia and the general public. Given the main purpose of this research was to evaluate the knowledge women in Sunderland have about domestic violence and help-seeking interventions, the questionnaire was designed in five sections allowing individual themes to be addressed. The survey contained both open and closed questions, limiting the amount of fixed replies and allowing for respondents to express their knowledge and opinions independently. It was designed to collate general information, firstly in relation to individual perceptions of

domestic violence and help-seeking and then further options for personal opinion were offered.

The purpose of the pilot study was to identify any problems with the survey questions and to ensure the research tool overall was fit for purpose. The pilot study was essential as, when using a self-completion questionnaire, there is no interviewer present to address any confusion over questions (Bryman, 2008). This process did identify inadequacies that affected the flow of the questions and the misinterpretation or understanding of some words. It also reinforced initial concerns regarding the difficulty and issues surrounding the understanding of behaviour associated with domestic violence and how to approach terminology that would enable understanding without prompting.

It was identified from the analysis of the pilot questionnaires that there was a need to think more about social class. From the data collated in the pilot, it was difficult to identify a class position of respondents (see appendix 4, section 1). While I am aware that regardless of social class, women are at risk of experiencing domestic violence (Hague & Malos, 2005; Wilcox, 2006) class position does determine how a person lives their life socially and economically (Savage et al, 2013; Crompton, 2008). It is unknown if a woman's knowledge of domestic violence, regardless of experience, differs by social class and the impact this could have on a help-seeking. However, Savage et al, (2013) argues that the boundary between classes is a difficult concept as class and stratification is entering a third phase, with a new

seven class model emerging. Individuals also locate themselves in terms of their current position in society. Hague & Malos, (2005:22) identify:

Social class has been, and continues to be, an issue for researchers and activists working against domestic violence.

Current research suggests middle-class women are far less likely to be researched in projects on domestic violence, as they do not come to the attention of community or statutory agencies (Hague and Malos, 2005). Whereas, working-class women are more likely to be in, or come into contact with support agencies responding to domestic violence (Hague & Malos, 2005). Research also suggests that middle-class women are less likely to report incidents to statutory agencies opting for more private intervention such as informal networks, civil or legal representation. Experiences in relation to domestic violence are diverse (Harne & Radford, 2008; Wilcox, 2006) among women so therefore it was felt important to identify any disparity in the knowledge women have as a result of being from differing classes.

Approaches for measuring class differ slightly between both economists and sociologists (Savage et al, 2013). However, feminist critics such as Crompton (2008) and Skeggs (2004) insist that a sole focus on occupation as a measure of class does not fully take into account the ways that class operates culturally. Therefore, questions were also included to ask about their household income, their highest qualification and employment as indicators to ascertain social class (see Savage et al, 2013; Crompton, 2008). This allowed for a more accurate analysis of

the social class of respondents and to ascertain if knowledge differed between the social classes.

Other problems identified in the pilot included that of younger respondents who failed to understand the term 'heterosexual'. Their most common word used to identify sexual orientation was 'straight' so this was included to ensure clarification. Sexuality was also queried as to why the option of 'prefer not to say' had not been offered. Due to the confidentiality of the questionnaire, this was initially presumed not to be needed as an option, however, upon recognising the sensitivity of the question for some, and the importance of a respondent's privacy, the option was included. The term co-habiting (see appendix 4, section 1) was also questioned by younger respondents who failed to understand what this meant. 'Living together' was the more frequently preferred term so this was also included to ensure clarity.

What proved most problematic were the questions relating to the behaviours associated with, and experiences of, domestic violence (see appendix 4, section 3). As discussed, the issue of definition is problematic. Mooney (2000:17) identified through research that:

There is a wide variation with respect to what might be defined as domestic violence.

This has also been reiterated by many feminists in the field and an area that is clearly highlighted as the starting point for any research on domestic violence (Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). Behaviour relating to domestic violence was

identified by respondents that had not been included in the questionnaire. This included sexual acts such as coerced or forced group sex, being coerced or forced into watching/viewing pornography and physical acts including, being stabbed and being confined to the home. Therefore, the acts were added to the questionnaire in the relevant sections. The options given to answer a question in section 3 (appendix 4) that related to the definition of domestic violence were also identified as problematic. Lists of behaviours were grouped under headings of financial, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and respondents were given the answer categories of yes or no. However, some respondents reported that they were unsure of some behaviours in the lists so, to give more choice, a box giving the option of not sure was added.

In section 4, respondents felt the answer categories were directed at personal experiences of domestic violence. Upon reflection on this, and the recognition that individual experiences were not essential to the research, this section was removed. This enabled section 5 on seeking help to be restructured, which allowed for the collation of more in-depth data on knowledge about help-seeking (see appendix 4). This included an exploration of informal and formal networks, if and when help would be sought and barriers that may prevent a pathway to help-seeking.

The construction and understanding of the questions is imperative in enabling accurate data to be collated about the knowledge respondents have and ultimately answering the research question. For example:

If you do not specify clear research questions, there is a great risk that your research will be unfocused and you will be unsure what your research is about and what you are collecting data for (Bryman, 2008:69).

Reflecting on all of the feedback received, the questionnaire was restructured to enable a clear understanding of what was being asked and an adequate response to each question offered. Following the completion of the on-line survey, the quantitative approach was able to proceed and the focus moved to data management and analysis.

3.8.4 Data Management and Analysis

The SPSS database was set up in variable view in order of the questions on the survey, and the variables were coded to enable all responses to be inputted correctly. The response to each question was then inputted in data view using the relevant variable code. However, if there was any missing data, this was coded as 9 and the dataset was set up to signify 9 as missing data. In instances where the code 9 was used to identify a response, any missing data was then coded with a number that was not a 'true figure' within that variable (Bryman, 2008). The data was also manipulated to enable analysis where respondents had acknowledged one or more behaviour from a list of choices. If behaviour was recognised, a '1' had been inputted to acknowledge their response. However, for behaviours that were not acknowledged in the lists a '2' had to be inputted to represent no, thus allowing analysis.

Once all the data was inputted frequency tables were conducted on the whole sample to identify the number of people belonging to or identifying with each variable. This also allowed for the identification of variation between variables. Frequency charts (see appendix 10-14) were used to identify the demographics of individual respondents, and to obtain the prevalence of individual variables. Bivariate analysis was carried out to explore whether there was any significant relationships between class and understanding of domestic violence, or definition. This was done using independent variables against dependant variables to see if a relationship existed. However, there were no significant relationships in the data analysis, but as I have pointed out it was not intended to be representative. The quantitative phase was successful, as it enabled the recruitment of respondents and, importantly, it allowed for the identification of key themes that were explored further in the qualitative phase. The key findings identified in the analysis of the on-line survey are set out below.

3.8.5. Findings

The data highlighted a key finding during the analysis of the demographic data. This was the inclusion of respondents from the middle-classes, and, as noted in the literature:

Middle-class women are far less likely to be 'researched' by researchers in relation to domestic violence (Hague & Malos 2005:22).

Social class in this research was measured in terms of income, education and residency (see Crompton, 2008; Savage et al, 2013; Skeggs, 2004). These socio-economic indicators are commonly used in the social sciences for measuring classification (see Crompton 2008; Skeggs, 2004). However, they do not take into account location through social mobility.

The demographics of respondents (see appendix 10)

Of the 147 female respondents –

Age range included:

Age group	18-24	25-39	40-54	55-69	70>
Frequency	26	76	37	7	1
Valid Percent	17.7%	51.7 %	25.2%	4.8%	.7%

Of those:

- 78.3% (n101) are employed full-time
- 53.5% (n69) earn over £30,000 per year
- 50.7% (n70) of respondents are educated to undergraduate level or above.
- 70.3% (n102) own their homes

The analysis (appendix 10) shows that 78% of the respondents' are in full-time employment, and in comparison the city overall has only 28.9% of females who are working full-time and this is a similar picture nationally with 30.6% (Office for

National Statistics, 2011). Also, I have found that the sample earn above the average income for women (£30,000) as the average annual income in Sunderland for women is £20,064 (Office for National Statistics, 2011) and the national average is £23,100 (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Just over half of the sample is educated to undergraduate level or above. However, statistics show that within Sunderland, only 21.8% are educated to NVQ level 4 (includes HND, Degree and Higher Degree level qualifications or equivalent) and above (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Home ownership (70%) however is characteristic of Sunderland, with 59.8% of the population owning their homes, and comparative nationally with 63.3% owner occupiers (Office for National Statistics, 2011).

The socio economic indicators suggest that the sample has captured a large proportion of middle-class women. However, class analysis is complex as individuals locate their own class identity and it has been found that there has been a 'shift from working-class to middle-class modes' (Savage, 2000:52). It is also argued as discussed that we are entering a 'third phase in the analysis of class' (Savage et al, 2013:221) making it difficult to identify a fixed class group for individuals. Access to social and cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1984) could also be an influencing factor, explaining the over representation of women from the middle-classes in this research (Savage, 2000).

Social capital however, not only relates to economic opportunities (Savage et al, 2013) but includes how a person's status stands them within their community (see

Bourdieu, 1984). A person's involvement with a group, either positively or negatively, is reinforced through their social network (Bourdieu, 1984) (see section 7.4). The social networks are not a given concept and Bourdieu (1984) argues the groups are constructed through investment, which results in benefits for the group they are part of. This, Bourdieu (1984) recognises, gives a person a sense of belonging offering the individual identity supporting their self-worth.

Bourdieu's theory of social capital links aspects of cultural capital that include the skills, education, manners, style of speech and style of clothing that we acquire, which give social habitus and identity that link us to the social class we form part of. This gives a sense of similarity and belonging with others who share the same symbolic values creating a group position and status (Bourdieu, 1984; Burkitt, 2008). However, cultural capital is also an influencing factor of social inequality as it constitutes power between those who have cultural capital and those who do not (see Bourdieu, 1984). Nevertheless, capital, whether social or cultural, underpins social life and positions a person within the social order (Bourdieu, 1984).

However, it appears a large proportion of the respondents in this study are employed in public service giving them direct access to cultural capital such as, computers, and have access to the internet as well as having the educational ability of being computer literate. This could suggest that internet use in 2009 was still largely PC based with predominant access in the workplace however, the rise of the smartphone and iPad since then might produce a wider class range today. There was however, a difference between how the respondents were classified by class

according to the measures in the survey and how they identified themselves in the interviews (section 3.9.1). As middle-class women have largely been excluded in research regarding domestic violence this inclusion gave the opportunity to identify any disparity on the knowledge women have about domestic violence and help-seeking.

The recognition of behaviours associated with domestic violence (see appendix 11)

Respondents were asked from a list of behaviours (appendix 9, section 3, Q17) if any were recognised as being an act of domestic violence. The findings (appendix 11) identified that financial abuse was the least recognised form of domestic violence:

- 38.5% (n57) of participants did not recognise that having your spending monitored was abusive
- 23.8% (n35) of participants did not acknowledge that having money controlled was abusive
- 16.2% (n24) did not acknowledge that having their income withheld by a partner was a form of domestic violence.
- Although emotional abuse was quite widely recognised as a form of domestic violence, only 73% (n106) acknowledged being told how to dress or how to do your hair was emotionally abusive.
- Sexual abuse was commonly acknowledged as a form of domestic violence but only 71% (n105) of participants recognised sex to keep the peace as coercive/abusive behaviour. However, 82% (n122) acknowledged being coerced into sex when you don't want to as abusive.

The data has enabled an analysis of the level of awareness women in general have into what behaviours are associated with domestic violence. This could have an impact both on definitions of domestic violence and on help-seeking behaviour. Therefore the behaviours associated with domestic violence were explored further in the qualitative phase to enable a more in-depth understanding of the knowledge women have of domestic violence and the impact this may have on help-seeking.

The recognition of domestic violence as a crime (see appendix 12)

Respondents were then asked if they considered any of the behaviours listed as being a crime (Appendix 7, section 3, Q18/19). Upon analysis (appendix 12) it was found:

- 27.5% (n38) considered all financial abuse a crime
- 45% (n63) considered all emotional abuse a crime
- 73% (n107) considered all sexual abuse as a crime
- 85% (n125) considered all physical abuse as a crime

The statistics show that behaviours relating to financial and emotional abuse were the least acknowledged forms of domestic violence and the least likely to be considered a crime. Less than half the sample identified financial and emotional behaviours as a crime, with just over two-thirds recognising sexual abuse as a crime within the intimate relationship. As expected physical violence was the most recognised form of domestic violence and most commonly named as a crime, but as we shall see there was a reluctance to seek help even if a serious assault were to take place.

Seeking Help (see appendix 13)

When asked when help may be needed outside the family regarding incidents of domestic violence (see appendix 7, section 4, Q34) the findings (see appendix 13) show that only:

- 27% (n40) would seek help immediately after an incident of domestic violence
- 43.9% (n65) would seek help if they experienced more than one incident
- 50% (n74) would seek help if they were injured
- 54.7% (n81) would seek help if they experienced a serious assault
- 60% (n89) would seek help if children were involved
- 37% (n54) would seek help if there were threats of violence
- 68% (n100) would seek help if their life was at risk

The figures illustrate a reluctance in respondents to seek help in response to domestic violence even if there is a risk of serious injury or when children are directly involved. There was also an apparent unwillingness by respondents to contact the Police for advice and support, with informal options such as friends and family being the preferred route. This reluctance to report is recognised in the British Crime Survey (2010/11), which identifies that figures are affected by under reporting. However, the BCS (2010/11) has reported a 35% increase in reported incidents from the 2009/10 survey. This finding is to be explored more in-depth in the qualitative phase.

Respondents were also asked why, if they would not seek help at all? (appendix 7, section 4, Q33) The most common barriers (see appendix 13) for not seeking help at all were:

- 19% (n28) identified they would be ashamed or humiliated
- 13.5% (n20) would be frightened what would happen when it came out
- 15% (n22) would not want to be labelled a victim

Respondents were asked if they would contact the police in response to an incident of domestic violence (appendix 13). However, only:

- 42.1% (n61) would contact the police in response to domestic violence

If respondents would not contact the police, they were asked why (see appendix 7, section4, Q26).

- 23% (n34) would be worried they would not be believed
- 18% (n27) would be worried they may not be taken seriously by the Police.
- 17.6% (n26) would not want to involve the police

The findings (appendix 13) confirm barriers that have been identified in previous research into domestic violence (Hague and Malos 2005; Harne and Radford 2008; Moe 2007; Mooney 2000). The barriers relate to other peoples' responses in both informal and formal networks and to the management of privacy that strengthens the silence and secrecy surrounding such behaviours in the home. These findings were explored further in the qualitative phase to enable a more in-depth understanding of why these barriers prevent women seeking help.

Help-Seeking Information (appendix 14)

The respondents' knowledge about help-seeking was explored and, if help from outside the family was needed in response to domestic violence, the respondents were asked whether they would know where to seek help (see appendix 7, section 4, Q19,21).

- 59.2% (n87) of respondents knew where to actually seek help, and of those
- 78% (n82) did know how to make contact with support services outside the family.

Just over half the respondents would know where to seek help and how to contact support agencies in the city (see appendix 14). This suggests that a substantial number of the respondents are unaware of help-seeking and the services that are available to them that respond to domestic violence. This will be explored more in-depth in the qualitative phase. The data analysis (see appendix 14) also shows that just over half of the respondents had recently seen any form of information that raised awareness of domestic violence, as shown below:

- 60.7% (n88) of respondents had recently seen an advert highlighting domestic violence.
- Only 5.6% (n8) of respondents thought enough information was available about domestic violence
- 40.2% (n43) of respondents thought a hard hitting television campaign was needed as a means of raising awareness
- Just 16.7% (n24) of respondents thought there were enough services in the city to support women

The findings suggest that information disseminated to raise awareness about domestic violence and help-seeking intervention is not reaching all women within general society. This, together with the issues of non-recognition and an unwillingness to report to the police as discussed earlier, could have a direct impact on the under reporting of incidents and/or abuse remaining hidden in the home (Harne & Radford, 2008; Mooney, 2000; Wilcox, 2006). It is apparent that respondents are not fully educated as to what behaviours are encompassed under the term domestic violence and could impact on their potential for help-seeking. The findings in this phase gave an insight into the knowledge women have about domestic violence and help-seeking, thus informing the interview schedule in the qualitative phase and enabling in-depth narrative to be captured.

3.9. Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase was utilised as the primary tool in this research as it needed to embrace not only the aims of the research question, but also suit the epistemological approach and my own feminist standpoint. This approach importantly gave the respondents a 'voice' to share their individual subjective realities, which allowed for the collation of in-depth narratives. The questions that made up the interview schedule (see appendix 15) in this phase were identified through the variables highlighted in the analysis of the quantitative data. The success in the design of the questions for the interview schedule was paramount to the fieldwork. This section sets out the processes of the qualitative phase and will

include the specificity of the sample, interview design, pilot study and the interview process.

Qualitative research methods were utilised in the form of in-depth semi-structured interviews. Open questions (see appendix 15) were employed to enable respondents to reply in a way that suited their understanding (May, 2001). This allowed for an in-depth analysis of individual understandings of what domestic violence is, knowledge or experiences of help-seeking intervention, any difficulties or barriers that impacted on the respondents obtaining support from service providers and whether secrecy and/or the silence surrounding domestic violence prevented survivors seeking help. The findings raise questions regarding the policy and practice of domestic violence and how help-seeking information is disseminated to women in society. However, prior to any data collation I had to select and contact a sample in preparation for the fieldwork.

3.9.1. Specificity of the sample

The sample in this phase of the research was recruited via the on-line survey. Fifty females came forward to participate in this research and, from the group, twenty females of self-identified age, social class and ethnic origin were chosen to participate in the fieldwork (see appendix 2). Contact with two respondents, 1 (18-20) and 1 (21-24) age groups) failed due to their changing of email and mobile phone details. This could have been influenced through a lapse in time between

completing the analysis of the data, and respondents being contacted for interview. However, by using purposive sampling, this allowed me to employ two more respondents from those age groups via the University Website. Whilst only one female of ethnic origin (Sikh) agreed to participate in this phase, this reflects the residents of the City of Sunderland with '95.9% white and only Asian or Asian British group making up 1.6%' of the population (Office of National Statistics, 2011:3). Interviews were conducted with women regardless of their experience of domestic violence as this was not the focus of the research.

The quantitative phase, as discussed, had attracted middle-class women and this enabled a particular sample to be recruited. However, class analysis is complex, as discussed, as individuals change and locate their class identity as their lives progress through social mobility. Savage (2000:52) insists, individuals can shift from 'working-class to middle-class modes' depending on their current social and cultural capital. This became apparent in the fieldwork as there was a difference between how the respondents were classified according to the measures in the survey and how they identified themselves in the interviews. The quantitative analysis of the 3 factors, education, income and housing (Crompton, 2008; Skeggs, 2004) identified 12 of the interview sample as middle-class, and 8 as working-class but, as shown below, these figures differed slightly when the respondents located their own class position during interview. Respondents who were identified as middle-class self-located as working-class and some who would be classified as working-class located themselves as middle-class. However, there was no identified difference in

knowledge about domestic violence in terms of class. The demographics of the sample are set out below then the layout of the interview schedule will follow.

Demographics of Respondents

Twenty women were chosen and recruited of varied economic status, age, experience of domestic violence and ethnic origin. To include a broad age range, respondents were interviewed from each of the following age groups. Tables identifying the demographics of the respondents are shown below.

Age

18-20	21-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+
1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3

Table 3.1 Age of Respondents

Marital status

Married	Divorced/single at point of interview	Separated/single at time of interview	In a relationship	Never married
11	3	1	3	2

Table 3.2 Marital Status

Qualifications

Masters Degree	Undergraduate Degree	GCSE	City&Guilds	NVQ	No Quals
2	7	4	1	4	2

Table 3.3 Qualifications

Housing Status

Rented accommodation	Owner Occupier
8	12

Table 3.4 Housing Status

Employment Status

Employed F/T	Employed P/T	Unemployed	Student	Retired
11 (7 working in service provision)	1	3	2	3 (1 Magistrate in DV courts)

Table 3.5 Employment Status

Household Income

Under 10,000	£11,000-£20,000	£21,000-£30,000	31,000-£40,000	£41,000-£50,000	£51,000-£60,000	No Response
3	3	4	5	2	2	1

Table 3.6 Household Income

Self-Class identification

Working-class	Middle-class	No self-location
12	7	1

Table 3.7 Self-Class Identification

3.9.2 Interview Schedule

The interview schedule (see appendix 15) was designed around eight key themes that emerged from the analysis of the on-line survey. Questions for each theme were formulated to enable respondents to 'answer in a way that suits their

understanding' (May, 2001:102). This allowed for an analysis of what the respondents defined as domestic violence, individual knowledge of domestic violence and knowledge or experiences of help-seeking. Any difficulties or barriers impacting on respondents knowing about and/or reaching service providers if they needed to was explored. Respondents were also asked if they were aware of any services in Sunderland and how to raise awareness of help-seeking support in Sunderland. It also enabled an exploration of the impact secrecy and/or the silence surrounding domestic violence has on help-seeking behaviour. Importantly, prior to the collation of the data in this phase the interview schedule was tested in a pilot study to test its effectiveness in gathering the required data to address the research question.

3.9.3. Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted in July 2010 with 5 respondents varying in economic status, age and professional and social, personal and professional experience. The respondents were recruited through professional and personal contacts and the interviews were carried out in a private space that was comfortable for both the respondent and me. Although the questions (see appendix 5) flowed, opening up much discussion, it became evident there was difficulty understanding the statutory definition of domestic violence. In response to this, the definition (see appendix 1) was put onto a card for respondents to read themselves and this alleviated any misunderstanding.

The pilot study also highlighted areas where more in-depth data could be collated through greater probing and possible further questions. This was in regards to what is understood by the term domestic violence and help-seeking as knowledge was limited. Additional prompts were added to the questions to enable more in-depth probing but also this helped to keep the focus on the interview questions (see appendix 15). Once the interview schedule was completed the interviewees were contacted.

3.9.4 Interview process

Interviewees were contacted by telephone and, after introducing myself, were briefed about the interview process, which was later confirmed with an information sheet (see appendix 6). Respondents were consulted about recording the data and all agreed the use of a digital Dictaphone, which would be erased once transcription had been completed. All respondents were advised they could have a copy of the recorded, or transcribed interview if they so wished; however, only 4 interviewees who work in service provision took up this request. However, upon completion of the transcription of each interview the respondents were emailed, and informed that if they wished at any time to read their transcript for accuracy they could obtain a copy. At the onset of each interview, respondents were asked if the information sheet (see appendix 6) had been read and if there were any questions, then a respondent consent form (see appendix 7) was read and then signed by each respondent. At the end of each interview, respondents were given a list of support

agencies in the area (see appendix 16) in case support was needed following the interview process.

Each interview was conducted in a location that was comfortable and convenient for both the respondent and the researcher with a predicted timescale of around sixty minutes for each interview. Due to the sensitive nature of the research the interviews were conducted in a space ensuring confidentiality and privacy with time and space for a debriefing if needed after each interview (Thompson, 1988). Some interviews were carried out in the respondents' home at their request, which meant safeguarding measures had to be put in place to ensure my safety (see section 3.2). The interviews commenced on the 13th September 2010 and were completed and transcribed by 31st July 2011.

Initially, interviews were to be completed within a six-month period, but the field work took longer than anticipated. This was influenced by work and personal commitments by both the respondents and the researcher, and the setting up of interviews at a time suitable to both parties. During the fieldwork interview notes were vital, and were written up immediately in a journal (see section 3.5) after each interview to ensure anything discussed after the interview had ended was logged; more so following interviews that needed a debrief. However, the process of reflection on each interview was at times in itself a painful process in reliving a respondents' emotion and pain (see section 3.12).

Transcription of the data was on-going throughout the field work and each interview was transcribed within a couple of days of the interview taking place. Each transcription was translated verbatim, from the dictaphone into a word document. The transcription was at times, as mentioned, a painful process and regular breaks were needed at times of emotional engagement. This was to ensure that the transcription was heard clearly, and written down verbatim. However, to ensure accuracy the transcripts were checked against the recordings for any errors. Some interviews also took longer to transcribe as they had ran over the sixty minute time schedule. I felt it important to personally transcribe each interview as the respondents had chosen to disclose and share this privileged narrative with me, but additionally, it enables familiarisation with the dataset (Silverman, 2011). All transcriptions were complete by 31st July 2011 and the data was also stored in NVivo ready for organisation of the demographics, and final key themes that emerged during the analysis, which is to be discussed in the following section.

3.10. Data Management: Thematic Analysis

While many qualitative ‘coding’ strategies exist in academic literature and various are utilised within the social sciences (see Biber & Leavey, 2007; Richards, 2009; Silverman, 2011) it was important that I utilised a coding strategy that importantly, corresponds to the aims of the research, but also allowed the ‘data to speak’ (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2009:159). Nevertheless, I was aware for example that:

However closely you aim to represent and respect your research subjects, human life is so complex and multifaceted that researchers constantly have to make decisions on selecting, refining and organizing perceptions to avoid drowning in data (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2009:159).

Additionally, vital to the process of the analysis of qualitative data is reflexivity, and the enhancing of the validity and reliability of the data. Indeed, Guest et al, (2012:85) questions,

How do we know if our data, our summaries and interpretation of them are valid?

However, O'Leary (2004) argues that this procedure of analysis requires a process that necessitates the management and organisation of the raw data, in that it: systematically codes and labels the data, allows reflexive analysis in order to interpret, uncover and discover meaning. In order to achieve this however, it is important to move systematically and reliably between the data, research question, aims and objectives, as well as the theoretical underpinnings and methodical constraints of the research (O'Leary, 2004; Richards, 2009; Silverman, 2011). It is also well documented that by making transcripts available to respondents for validation of their 'truth', or story this can also enhance validity (Richards, 2009; Silverman, 2011). With this in mind, and with consideration as to how reflexivity would be used in the process, thematic analysis (see Attride-Stirling, 2001; Silverman, 2011) was utilised as it gives the researcher the tools to apply a stringent process.

Thematic analysis importantly, links with my feminist standpoint in that it allows the 'researcher to keep the language of the respondent as far as possible' (Bryman, 2008:554), suggesting a greater reliability (Richards, 2009). This was an important point as, through my positioning in the field and the practice of shared experiences, it ensured only the narrative of the respondents was included in the analysis. I am also aware that the discourses around domestic violence are complex, and individual experiences are diverse so, regardless of the respect I had for the respondents', the data had to be organised and analysed to make use of the rich data that would be the focus of this research (Letherby, 2007).

Thematic analysis is a method that uncovers and identifies similarities and differences within narrative, from which salient key themes and sub themes emerge from the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Then by using thematic mapping (see appendix 17-19) it enables the structuring of the themes that have emerged (Attride-Stirling, 2001). However, it is difficult to identify a specific agreement about what thematic analysis is, or how you approach it (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun and Clarke, 2006) therefore, the process set out by Silverman (2011) was utilised.

The thematic approach set out by Silverman (2011) involves initially, familiarising yourself with the dataset, and this includes listing comments and ideas. The process of familiarisation by reading and getting to know the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006) had been on-going throughout the course of the fieldwork, and this began at transcription. The Ideas, comments and opinions that were articulated by

respondents prior to and after the interview processes, including reflexive thoughts about the actual interview process of which were noted in the research journal, were also included in the process of familiarisation. Throughout this process of familiarisation however, I was constantly aware that I had to see beyond each respondents' narrative and bring together a data set as a whole for analysis (Silverman, 2011). However, initial familiarisation enables links to be made within the dataset that form part of the initial coding process.

Prior to the next stage of producing initial codes, the questions that had been asked about descriptive attributes, such as marital status, employment, education and class were coded and stored. The process of initial coding was carried out manually as it enabled a greater familiarisation of the data (see Silverman, 2011). This of course meant going through the dataset consistently word by word, line by line to identify anything of specific interest. The labelling of the codes was carried out by writing in the margins, using post it notes to link codes, and making notes in the journal. As this process is lengthy, and at times repetitive it was essential all codes were labelled with related notes to enable a more effective review of the dataset at a later date.

This process was data driven, and coding related to single words as well as extracts in the dataset. For example, if the context of sexual abuse was dependent on the accompanying data, then it was coded as a whole, but if the word sex or sexual was independent then it was coded alone. The dataset went through this process 4 times, and as similar coding types emerged they were collated under specific labels,

such as behaviour or help-seeking. This phase of initial coding enabled interesting elements of the raw data to be assessed and generated systematically throughout the dataset (Silverman, 2011). Following the process of initial coding there emerged evidence of similarities across respondents' accounts, which were the focus for further analysis in the next stage.

Following a systematic approach, the next stage was to identify potential themes within the dataset by collating similar codes, thus forming a link that would bring the data together (Silverman, 2011). As this suggests, the process of coding was to take a segment, or piece of text and give it a name (Hesse-Biber & Leavey, 2007). This allows for the respondents' words and experiences to be linked to key themes, which have been identified both in current theoretical and empirical work (Silverman, 2011). For example, codes were linked to definition, naming it, barriers or help-seeking through the use of document mapping on a white board, which was vast. This process was also completed manually, because as both Braun and Clarke (2006) and Silverman, (2011) point out, it allows familiarisation with the codes, enables the researcher to make the link with current academic studies, but importantly, the researcher is active in the analysis. However, this was a slow process that took around six months to complete, as reflection is ongoing as each theme is modified, or new labels emerge and codes are reviewed and moved.

Once the dataset had been exhausted and all the potential themes were identified then it was essential to review those themes (Silverman, 2011). The review, or what

Silverman (2011) also refers to as the process of data reduction, meant; looking for codes that did not fit, that each theme was logical, remove anything repetitive, and highlight new ideas. However, repetition at this stage is not to be dismissed as it was through this process new dominant sub themes emerged, which also aided reduction (see below). Indeed, Silverman, (2011:285) argues, in the latter stages it 'could be a sign that you have hit gold'. The use of a thematic map (see appendix 17) at this point is also recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Silverman (2011) in order to make sense and link potential themes.

However, at this stage themes and codes were still vast, ongoing reflection led to relabeling, and sub themes were beginning to emerge. For example, within help-seeking the sub themes of formal and informal support became prominent therefore, relevant codes were moved and attached to the appropriate theme (see appendix 17). For instance, within the sub theme of formal, codes such as, the names of individual agencies, type of support, what was known or not known about that agency was reviewed and recoded. This meant a thematic map (see appendix 18) would be needed for each theme, subtheme or idea, as the data, for all it was reducing, was still vast. At times in order to be able to reflect on the bigger picture and begin to reduce the data, I had to remove myself from it for a while. It was through reflexive practice of the dataset that themes emerged, which presented no link to the current literature.

The final stages of analysis involve reflection, refining the themes and the links between them, thus enabling a discussion to evolve. This process was lengthy and

complex as suggestions, proposals and associations start to emerge. It is at this point where judgements have to be made, and each theme must be modified, which may mean moving away from the 'descriptive, verbatim labels' at times (Silverman, 2011:277). This stringent process however, allows for more theoretical labelling practices to emerge. By reflecting on the written documents and thematic maps it enabled the development and management of the key themes and new ideas (appendix 18). It was through this process that a relationship between experiences of domestic violence, and knowledge emerged as the data was refined. This was crystallised in the 3 identified groups of knowledge about domestic violence, which, after further analysis, were named the experiential, institutional and notional groups (see appendix 20).

Upon recognising striking similarities across different accounts during the analysis memoing was used to enable traces to be made (Hesse-Biber and Leavey, 2007) within the dataset. Once the traces were linked I returned to the transcripts to enable the similarities to be explored. It became apparent through the emerging key themes that the individual knowledge about domestic violence was reflective of respondents' personal experiences of domestic violence, and the similarities were brought together producing 3 core categories into which each respondent fell.

The analysis highlighted that respondents who presented no personal or professional experience of domestic violence provided similar accounts in response to the interview questions and these accounts reflected a notional knowledge and understanding of domestic violence. Respondents who identified themselves as

having personal experiences of domestic violence also presented similarities in terms of their knowledge about domestic violence and gave accounts with similarities across the emerging themes, so those respondents were categorised into the experiential group (see appendix 20). Lastly, the remaining respondents were identified as those who worked within service provision and whose accounts reflected a more professional knowledge and experience of domestic violence. Even when some of these respondents also had personal experience of domestic violence their accounts were more reflective of a professional knowledge than the experiential group, though there is some overlap between these groups (see appendix 20). Thus, respondents were divided into these 3 groups in order to make the analysis more reflective of their experience (or not) of domestic violence as discussed in chapter one and chapter seven.

In the final stages of the analysis (see appendix 19) to maintain the organisation of the data, and the coding process, a computer software package NVivo was utilised. However, it has to be acknowledged that this tool can only do what it is asked to do, and its reliability depends on the skill of the researcher (Bazeley, 2007). The preferred manual approach was used as the overall method of analysis as discussed above (see appendix 19). Nvivo was only used as a means of support in managing, organising and storing the collated data. This software offered a collection of tools that aided the qualitative data analysis (Bazeley, 2007). For example, this helped in the management of the data such as the transcripts, diary notes, interview schedule and other publications relevant to the work. This was also

useful for storing the demographics of respondents, attaching notes to segments of texts, linking memos or making general observations.

The software also stored codes within themes or ideas, enabled data to be queried or searched, which supported the analysis of the key themes in the final stages. For example, the data was transferred into NVivo under free nodes labelled; definition, barriers and help-seeking, from the free nodes emerged tree nodes, which linked sub themes, such as non-recognition, naming it, privacy, informal, formal etc (see Bazeley, 2007). All of which along with the current theoretical and empirical work aided the discussion in the findings chapters. The overall process of data analysis took little over a year to complete, however, as Silverman (2011) notes, there are times when you have to step back, and break from the data to enable the broader picture to be seen.

3.11. Significance of the research

This thesis has explored the knowledge women in Sunderland have about help-seeking in response to domestic violence, focussing on women, regardless, of their experience of domestic violence. As previously mentioned, there is a comprehensive body of research in response to domestic violence but, there is no recognised research with a specific focus on help-seeking information and the knowledge women have about domestic violence and the interventions available to them regardless of experience.

This research has also captured a large proportion of middle-class women, which, as discussed previously, are predominantly missing from research into domestic violence (Hague and Malos, 2005). It was found upon analysis that 5 of the 7 respondents' who located themselves as middle-class had identified as having experienced domestic violence. Feminist researchers point out that middle-class women are far less likely to be researched as they tend not to be in contact with community or statutory agencies in relation to domestic violence. The focus of research on survivors who are known to agencies responding to domestic violence could have influenced the exclusion of middle-class women.

As this was a new area of research, a mixed method approach was utilised to not only enable the recruitment of a wide range of women, but also inform the qualitative phase. This approach enabled the collation of in-depth narrative during the fieldwork, thus producing knowledge. To note, I do not perceive that the knowledge produced is a 'universal truth' as the research was carried out in a local geographical space dependent on the respondents' settings, and individual experiences. However, those settings and individual, lived experiences of domestic violence, and knowledge of help-seeking intervention could be re-examined within different geographical areas or nationally. The production of knowledge in this research has been validated through the voices of the respondents', through the interconnection of experiences, and understandings (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). This is identified by Harding as 'socially situated knowledge' (2004:127) and, to achieve this, is to begin with the lives of the women and listen to the difficulties of

everyday life (Harding 1987, 2004; Hartsock, 1983; Smith, 1987). Through the stringent process of analysis, emerges a collection of authentic dialogue, thus 'producing knowledge'.

Importantly, the original contribution to knowledge in this thesis was the identification of 3 identified groups that reflect different knowledge, which have been named as the experiential, institutional and notional groups. The respondents were then divided into these groups in order to make the analysis more reflective of their experience or not of domestic violence. This raises the concern as to how domestic violence is understood by the groups, which ultimately impacts on help-seeking. The identified groups have not been recognised in any other research into domestic violence and are a key factor in making sense of what is known about help-seeking, and how it is understood. What has been found is that, depending on which group a woman falls into, her knowledge of domestic violence and help-seeking intervention will be different.

Additionally, through fieldwork process and reflexive practice, is the recognition of a form of conscious-raising that I have termed an 'ontological transition' (see section 3.4). This occurs when individuals reflect on their own lived realities and, as a consequence, develop a new perspective on their life. Whilst this is not directly linked to the area of research, it is an important part of the fieldwork process. While there is much discussion around reflexivity (see Holmes, 2010), responses to the impact of emotional engagement felt by both the researched and researcher in the field is, on the whole, missing from reflexive academic discourse.

3.12. In the field: The impact of reflexive practice

The fieldwork was the most significant part of the research study, as this is where I would collate my rich, in-depth narrative on an area of study I am deeply passionate about. Whilst the research was not about individual experiences of domestic violence but the knowledge respondents have of help-seeking services, I was prepared for disclosure by some respondents of incidents of domestic violence. Much research into the difficulty of exploring sensitive issues (see Holmes, 2010; Renzetti & Lee, 1993; Lee, 1993) had been studied in-depth including ethical processes in ensuring minimum harm to all recruited in the research.

Positionality, as discussed was a key concept in the research process, not only in relation to my feminist standpoint, but also as a researcher exploring what is a sensitive issue. It was my intention at the onset of each interview, prior to any questions, to informally attempt to break down any barriers through the introductions, thus enabling the interview to proceed without awkwardness. The positioning of myself in the field was an important part of the interview process, in attempting to challenge barriers of power that allowed respondents to talk in-depth about their knowledge and experiences (Harding, 2004). Through attempting to make myself visible would enable some deconstruction of the 'knowing self' (Hekman, 2004) and the individual standpoints of the respondents' lived realities to be shared and heard.

As discussed in section 3.3, my positioning in each interview was varied. The respondents with personal experiences of domestic violence at the onset asked about my interest in the area of research, and I briefly shared some of my lived experiences of domestic violence prior to the interview process. This appeared to immerse myself in their individual realities, removing a sense of difference that lead to a relaxed discussion. This undoubtedly gave the respondents the strength and comfort to share lived experiences, which for some had never been disclosed previously, to a woman they presumed understood their pain. This positioning was met with a depth of emotion as the women reflected on their lived experiences, and this meant staying on after the interview with some respondents as discussed further in this section.

The respondents with no direct experience of domestic violence did not question the reason for the research, but believed it to be important for women if knowledge can be gained on the subject. My positioning appeared to be accepted in that I was a woman trying to find out about an issue which little was known about, in an attempt to improve women's lives, and that made them keen to share any knowledge. However, those respondents working within front-line service provision responding to domestic violence appeared to accept my positioning through being a fellow professional, freely discussing their individual work ethic and practices, and for some disclosing personal experiences. There appeared a presumption that I understood their individual working policies and practices and the issues they faced.

Reflexivity has enabled me to reflect on my own lived reality and experiences, both professionally and personally prior to the fieldwork process (Hertz, 1997, Holmes, 2010). Reflexivity is complex, and for me it was more than just reflection on practice processes. The practice of reflexivity includes people, their emotions and experiences, and I was included in this this process. This process has also brought to the fore a form of conscious-raising that I have termed an ontological transition (see section 3.4 and 3.12), thus presenting the opportunity to build on feminist standpoint understandings about the process of consciousness-raising.

Domestic violence is a sensitive and emotive issue that, as researchers, we can only be made aware of and be prepared to deal with appropriately in the field. Indeed, the impact and depth of emotional engagement experienced by respondents in this research had to be dealt with in the field to ensure minimum harm. I also had to deal with the after- effects of the emotion, which were felt by me following the fieldwork and through transcription and analysis.

An important lesson taken from the interview process is that of acknowledging the 'other selves' of the researcher and the researched (Reinharz, 1992). As a researcher, the aim was to gather as much rich data as possible during the interview process and leave with original narrative, although as Edwards (1993:185) importantly notes:

Researchers are not just recording instruments through which subjects are able to make visible their personal experiences.

Researchers are variables in the research process who bring with them their own histories and experiences (Edwards, 1993; Holmes, 2010). Jaggar (1997) argues emotions are a necessary feature of our lives and should not be dismissed in the research process but, embraced as emotions form part of knowledge. This, as discussed in section 3.3, is why it is good practice to consider a researcher's personal biography prior to the analysis of the data (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003).

The impact of individual emotions and ontological transitions had to be dealt with in the field both during the interview process, and upon completion. Respondents had asked about my interest in the topic prior to the commencement of their interview, and some presumed, that I understood their depth of pain and emotion through the acknowledgment of common experiences. However, this is impossible to know; we all feel emotion and pain differently with experiences and individual standpoints being diverse. While this process was troubling, painful and complex, my focus was on the respondents in ensuring their emotional well-being, and this meant staying with some of the respondents long after the interview had ended. Thompson (1988:211) recommends 'remaining a while after the interview is over to give a little of yourself'. With some interviewees, a debriefing was vital due to the depth of emotion and pain involved; their well-being was paramount.

Throughout the fieldwork process I was dealing reflexively with the transitions the respondents had, or were going through such as, individual emotions, feelings and change to their lives. However, after the interview process reflexive thoughts about

what the respondents had gone through during their interview, and reliving their experiences during transcription brought to the fore the 'emotionalisation' of the reflexive process (see Holmes, 2010). An additional concern was how would I give justice to the privileged narrative the respondents had shared? How do I hold the reflexive emotion as a source of knowledge in the academic discourse? It is imperative I give 'voice' to the respondents who trusted and passed on their most personal, violent experiences and, as standpoint puts women at the centre of academic thinking, and the production of knowledge, it has allowed me do this.

As a researcher in the field, any emotional impact felt was contained out of concern for the respondent: I felt their pain and anguish but a barrier was accentuated in managing the situation to ensure minimum harm. However, as a researcher, I was not prepared for the continued impact of emotionalisation after the fieldwork, and the ontological transitions of the respondents that took place. After all, this work was about individual knowledge of help-seeking in response to domestic violence and, whilst I had calculated risk reflexively prior to the fieldwork, I was not prepared for the impact during both the reflexive process and transcription. Holmes (2010) identifies that emotional processes in sensitive research can lead to the emotional exhaustion of the researcher, and this became apparent during transcription. The emotional load I was carrying was discussed with the supervisory team and they supported me in dealing with it.

Emotion is evident in all sensitive research, and as previously mentioned, would we be human if we did not feel another's pain and emotion? As Jaggar (1989) pointed out, without emotion there would be no life. Emotion governs our everyday lives regardless of who we are and, as academic researchers, we are not exempt from this. Emotion is core to the reflexive process (Holmes, 2010) and whilst there is much discussion around reflexivity, attention to the depth of emotion felt in research processes is largely missing from methodological and reflexive theoretical explanations and writings (see Holmes, 2010). It is important as researchers that we recognise not only the emotional pain that can be placed on the respondent as they reflect on lived experiences, but also the emotional load of the researcher both during and after the fieldwork (Edwards, 1993). Acknowledging and understanding this process allowed me to locate my position as a researcher in the overall research practice. Through the process of analysis the respondents' 'voice can be represented, listened to and understood' (Biber & Leavey, 2007:131) through the findings chapters.

Domestic violence is emotive and seen as a 'personal' issue, and this was recognised from the outset having had professional experience through service provision, as well as knowledge gained in academia and personal experiences. Importantly, the design allowed for the collation of in-depth data with no, or minimal harm to all those involved. Emotional engagement is a difficult concept, which a researcher can only be made aware of, and be prepared to deal with appropriately, in the field. Reflexivity allows the researcher to take a critical look inward and recognise inter-subjective realities, and acknowledging and dealing with emotion is

part of this process. Feminist standpoint is at the heart of sensitive research, and it has allowed the rich, in-depth narrative to be captured, and analysed in an attempt to bring about social change and justice for women. The knowledge about domestic violence and help-seeking captured in the narrative in this research is to be articulated in the following findings chapters.

Chapter Four

Domestic Violence: The Complexity of Naming It

The findings chapters discuss the data in relation to the difficulties in naming domestic violence, barriers to help-seeking and routes to help-seeking through the perspectives of 3 identified groups of respondents' (see appendix 2). The respondents' were divided into these groups in order to make the analysis more reflective of their knowledge of domestic violence, how these groups are positioned ultimately shapes their potential for help-seeking. There is the experiential group (see appendix 2), which encompasses the 7 respondents' who identified themselves as having experiences of domestic violence, either personally or within the close family. The knowledge on the whole relates only to their personal experiences of domestic violence, and help-seeking.

In the institutional group (see appendix 2) are the 8 respondents who identified themselves as working in service provision, which either, directly or indirectly, responds to domestic violence. The respondents were employed within the statutory and third sectors in social housing, children's services, social work and the criminal justice system. It was found four respondents in this knowledge group articulated some personal experience of domestic violence. However, one respondent did not name her experiences as domestic violence until she began to question her position at the end of the interview. The knowledge of these respondents' however, was

predominantly based on their professional remit, and on the whole the analysis reflected similarities to other members in the group.

The notional group (see appendix 2) includes the 5 respondents who identified themselves as having no experience of domestic violence, either professionally or personally. This group is also made up of the youngest and oldest respondents in the research. The narrative of the notional group was on the whole speculative, and based on what they had heard or read. What is evident is the different knowledge, and understanding the 3 groups have about domestic violence, and how this shapes their potential help-seeking.

This chapter starts with a discussion of how the respondents in their identified groups define and understand domestic violence differently. It brings to the fore the behaviours that respondents perceive domestic violence to be, and the behaviours that have the opportunity to become normalised, minimised and tolerated within heterosexual relationships. There is a discussion of violent behaviours, which can be normalised and tolerated within the private sphere, but challenged openly in public as a crime. It highlights the complexity involved in defining, recognising and naming behaviours associated with domestic violence that, for some, has become normalised through cultural and gendered norms, which are embedded within their heterosexual relationships, all of which prevent help-seeking.

The chapter is shaped around common themes that emerged during analysis of the differing knowledge of the 3 respondent groups. This includes understandings of what domestic violence is, how violence against women is understood within the private and public sphere, and the complexity of recognising and naming domestic violence. There is also a discussion of how emotional violence can be, and is, normalised and tolerated through cultural and gendered norms within the abusive heterosexual relationship.

Domestic violence and the complexity surrounding what it actually is has been the subject for discussion among feminists, researchers, practitioners and policy makers largely since the 1970s. Harne and Radford (2008) state that recognising domestic violence is happening is an on-going process, as women do not always recognise what is happening to them initially. Naming such behaviours as domestic violence is intricate. When does behaviour such as a playful slap, being asked to wear specific clothing or comments about how to do your hair, if at all, move from what is accepted or recognised as fun, normal and taking an interest to being acknowledged as unacceptable behaviour? How this is recognised will be influenced by many things such as:

What actually happened, how family life was experienced in childhood or how it is represented in influential cultural portrayals of 'family life' whether by the media, or in different cultures or religions (Harne and Radford, 2008:26).

It is evident in this research that domestic violence is not fully understood, or for some, not recognised regardless of group type. Some physically violent behaviour was named as domestic violence in this research, but for others it was normalised, tolerated and hidden within the intimate relationship for many years. It may seem straightforward in naming violent or abusive behaviour but:

Some women will define a push or shove as physical violence, whereas others will not (Mooney, 2000:143).

Behaviour such as this may also be accepted as normalised behaviour, or seen as playful (Harne and Radford, 2008).

Naming some aspects of domestic violence such as emotional or financial are more problematic and, as mentioned, complex. Liang et al, (2005) found it is not until the violent behaviour moves outside of the realm of what has become normal, that help or advice is sought. Influencing the ability to recognise and name behaviours associated with domestic violence undoubtedly depends on a woman's understanding of what domestic violence is. Therefore, the following section will present the findings of the notional, institutional and experiential groups on their general perceptions of what the groups understand domestic violence to be.

4.1 Defining Domestic Violence: Respondents' perceptions

Defining domestic violence and the numerous behaviours associated with it, is in itself complex. Physical violence (as discussed in chapter two) has been at the forefront in bringing recognition to violence against women since the 1970s, and is the form most commonly identified. Consistent within the literature is that physical violence is now acknowledged as being just one part of the phenomena with 'other types of violence being highlighted by survivors' (Hague and Malos, 2005:7). The broader aspect of domestic violence and how it is understood by women in general society has been explored in this thesis to ascertain the level of awareness and the impact this has on help-seeking.

This section focuses on the groups' perceptions of what domestic violence is, and how it is understood. The knowledge of the respondents' highlight not only personal and professional experiences, but cultural and gendered norms, which influence an apparent tolerance of what could be abusive behaviours within the intimate relationship. Common themes are evident in each respondent group, which link understandings of certain behaviours but also highlights how the groups define and understand domestic violence, slightly and, at times, dramatically differently, depending on their knowledge. However, while the understandings and knowledge of definition varied between the 3 groups, they all understood domestic violence to involve physical violence.

A hand-out of the Northumbria Police Force's (2009) definition (see appendix 1) of domestic violence was given to respondents' to read, and they were asked from that if they could explain what they thought domestic violence was. However, respondents in the notional group found it difficult to define domestic violence as they did not understand what the individual terms meant. For example, what was encompassed under the term threatening behaviour, or what was meant by the term 'violence' (see Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Mason, 2002). The group principally defined domestic violence as a form of physical violence in terms of experiencing an actual bodily assault. As Linda said:

When you read and think about domestic violence you think they have a black eye, or you get hit in places where people cannot see. [64yrs, notional group]

The common assumption made about domestic violence is that a woman is given a black eye through the act of actual bodily harm, which contributes to how domestic violence is recognised and named, if it is at all. Mooney (2000) reported that 92% of survivors considered domestic violence to be physical violence resulting in actual bodily harm. Predominantly, the notional group understood domestic violence to be physical abuse, and the respondents in that group had little knowledge of other behaviours associated with domestic violence. In line with the work of Mooney (2000) the findings show that domestic violence is still commonly named as physical violence regardless of age. For example: 'It is when your boyfriend hits you, I just thought domestic violence was being hit' [Chelsea 19yrs, notional group].

The youngest respondents in this research are in the notional group and had very little knowledge or understanding of what domestic violence actually is. As discussed in chapter two Government strategies in raising awareness of domestic violence amongst women and girls⁶ (Home Office, 2003) was given greater impetus by the Labour Party and, the rhetoric continues in current government policy. However, it is evident that information raising awareness about the broader aspects of domestic violence is not reaching all women in society. The knowledge the notional group had of domestic violence was largely based on media influences in what they had seen on television or read in a magazine. For example:

It is just when you hear things off the television and radio, that it's really. [Linda, 64yrs, notional group]

The narrative supports the argument of Harne and Radford (2008) in how domestic violence is understood will be influenced by many things, and one is how it is portrayed by the media. It also reflects what Donovan and Hester (2010:4) have named the 'public story', through public discourse raising the prominence of physical violence as domestic violence (chapter two). Wilcox (2006) argues this prominence has the tendency to silence accounts of sexual, emotional and financial abuse. Knowledge about domestic violence in the notional group was defined by physical violence with very little or no knowledge of other forms of domestic violence. The positioning of the knowledge of the notional group was through media

⁶ See, Safety & Justice Proposal (2003) and the NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DELIVERY PLAN (2005)

influences or what had been read suggesting that predominantly physical abuse is portrayed as domestic violence.

The respondents in the institutional group, having professional knowledge, were able to give a broader definition of domestic violence by incorporating some other terms of abuse:

Well it is not just physical it's sexual, mind games everything and it covers women, men, and children. It's not just physical violence it is everything. It could be just someone keeping money from you, keeping a firm grip on everything that is going on in the house. I have just read everything I have got on it so things are coming to me, but it covers everything really. [Pauline, 54yrs, institutional group]

Pauline had just read up on the subject prior to the interview to refresh her memory. She admitted, her knowledge was limited to professional experiences she had encountered. The institutional group highlighted that their knowledge of domestic violence had developed through their professional roles, and that prior to this, understandings had been based on actual bodily harm, similarly to that of the notional group. The institutional group's knowledge and understanding, as identified in the narrative, had been gained through frontline experience of domestic violence:

I did think originally domestic violence, before I started working in service provision, was physical violence predominantly carried out by a partner to another partner whatever gender. I now understand it to be a lot broader and I would probably use the term domestic abuse, which covers obviously financial, sexual and emotional. [Marie, 32yrs, institutional group]

Individual knowledge, as Marie has articulated, was based on physical violence, until her understanding of domestic violence was shaped through her professional role. This was substantiated by others in the institutional group who had only broadened their knowledge of domestic violence through their working culture in the agency they were part of. For some in this group, it was apparent that their understanding was also influenced by personal realities, which were either named as domestic violence or recognised as abusive, but not categorised as domestic violence, which is illustrated further in this chapter (see p.178/179), and also discussed in chapter five.

As would be expected, the respondents in the experiential group had a greater understanding about the complexity of defining domestic violence. The experiential group were able to draw on examples of domestic violence through personal experiences. While the respondents in this group named physical violence as a form of domestic violence, additionally, they highlighted the element of control that had become familiar through individual personal experience:

It all depends on the circumstances, what they are going through really but domestic violence is all about control to me. A lot of it is control, it is one person's control over another's movements, their day-to-day routine. It is the whole thing around control over money you know, it is you can have that much and you know I want this much change. [Abhijita 44yrs, experiential group]

The word 'control' was commonly used by respondents in the experiential group to define most aspects of domestic violence. The notional group, and the majority of

the institutional group did not include the word 'control' in their definitions of domestic violence. It was only 2 members of the institutional group who referred to the element of control one of the members had experienced domestic violence. Jessica (experiential group) also defined domestic violence as 'total control', which ultimately limited individual autonomy, which can have a serious impact on the daily lives of women. For example:

I would see it as any form of controlling, manipulating, bullying, physical abuse, financial, everything, just control, total control over another person. [Jessica, 30yrs, experiential group]

The experiential group had been able to illustrate the impact of control through their subjective positioning. However, the difficulty in defining aspects of domestic violence other than physical violence was raised by the institutional group:

You can explain the physical abuse very easy because it is kicking, punching and all the physical acts of violence but to explain the others is really difficult. [Christine, 49yrs, institutional group]

What is suggested here is that a bruise or a broken limb enables a label to be attached to a violent act as it is visible; however, explaining more intricate and manipulative behaviours is difficult. This, as long since argued by Kirkwood (1993) (as discussed in chapter two) has an impact on why women do not recognise, and name other aspects of domestic violence. Physical violence, as expected, was defined as the most common form of domestic violence by all 3 respondent groups.

For the notional group, actual bodily harm was predominantly the only behaviour acknowledged as domestic violence. This was dramatically different to the position of the respondents in the experiential group who defined control as a common factor of domestic violence, illustrating how it underpins other aspects of domestic violence. The personal experiences of the experiential group had now enabled the element of control to be defined. Two respondents (Theresa and Susan) in the institutional group did articulate the element of control. However, Susan had disclosed she had experienced domestic violence in a previous relationship, which had possibly influenced the positioning of her knowledge:

It is physical, emotional, verbal, acts of aggression, controlling behaviour. I suppose a loss of identity sort of, taking away someone's choice. Any type of physical or sexual violent act towards someone it sort of encompasses a lot of things. [Susan, 23yrs, institutional group]

Domestic violence, as Susan articulates, does encompass many forms of unacceptable behaviours and she also recognises the impact of controlling behaviour.

As discussed in chapter two, how behaviours associated with domestic violence are defined and disseminated by government and front-line agencies will influence what is known publically about domestic violence. This in turn will have an impact on the knowledge and understanding women in society have of domestic violence and whether or not a path to help-seeking would be sought. The findings in this research

suggest that the first stage in the process of help-seeking is recognising that what is being experienced is domestic violence.

Government definitions of domestic violence, as discussed in chapter two, are incident based prioritising behaviours that are within the legal framework. This may give impetus to physical and sexual violence being commonly recognised as a form of domestic violence. This implements a barrier for women in defining other forms of domestic violence, more so financial and emotional violence. Significantly, however, no respondent in the notional or experiential group's defined sexual violence as a form of domestic violence. However, the experiential group do talk about experiences of sexual abuse (see section 5.3). Domestic violence has to be defined, understood and named for it to be challenged both privately and publicly. A common theme that has emerged in this research is that domestic violence is understood to include physical violence. However, it was found that physical violence can be normalised and minimised within the heterosexual relationship but, in comparison, assaults by men against women in the public arena are immediately acknowledged as a crime. As illustrated in the following section.

4.2 Understanding violence in the Public/Private Arena

This section offers a discussion of violent behaviours that can go unrecognised as domestic violence within the private sphere, but challenged in the public sphere. There will be a discussion about the barriers that prevent the naming of abusive

behaviour in the private sphere as domestic violence. The findings will be presented through the 3 respondent groups however, one significant difference is that the experiential group recognises the complexity of naming domestic violence as a crime.

It is apparent there is a belief that consent seems to be a one-off act, given when a woman through choice agrees to being in an intimate relationship with a man (p:166). This then assumes automatic approval to any type of behaviour, including what could be a crime, as it is believed it is consented to through principles of choice and consent. This is illustrated below by members of both the notional and experiential groups. The institutional group presented a broader understanding of the criminal element of domestic violence, as expected, and recognises the barriers that prevent a path to help-seeking.

Existing literature shows that most women do not seek help in response to violent or abusive behaviour until crisis point is reached, or women are in fear of their lives (see chapter 2). A stranger assault in society is instantly recognised and named as a criminal act, whereas an assault within an intimate relationship is, at times, normalised and accepted culturally. The BCS (2010/11) reported that physically violent assaults upon women by a stranger resulting in injury accounted for 55% of all violent offences, in comparison to the 17% of violence assaults that is reported within intimate relationships. Sexual assaults reported by women in the public sphere accounted for 12%, in comparison to the 2.5% of reported cases within the intimate relationship. However, the BCS acknowledges their figures are affected by

serious under-reporting due to the sensitive nature of the offence (BCS, 2010/11:62), and it is unknown if some of the victims were from same-sex relationships. However, the figures do highlight the significant difference between the reporting of stranger and intimate partner assaults.

One significant difference between that of a stranger assault and an assault by a partner is that:

Being assaulted by an intimate partner generates massive emotional distress and sense of loss, leading to insecurity within the home (Harne and Radford, 2008:22).

Stranger attacks are predominantly one-off assaults that happen in public spaces, which can enrage society, however, the woman then has the safety of her home to which to return. Harne and Radford (2008) have pointed out there is no safe haven following an assault within the intimate relationship, and women can be at risk of further abuse. Violence in the private/public arena was explored in this research to ascertain a more in-depth understanding of the difference between an assault by a stranger and assault by a partner:

Violence between strangers is seen as an attack because you do not know the person and you do not know their strengths and weaknesses. But when it is in a relationship it is not seen as much of a problem because they are living together. They are choosing to be together, it is in their relationship. [Amy 21yrs, notional group]

This narrative suggests that violent behaviour experienced in an intimate relationship may not be recognised as criminal or unacceptable because a couple are 'choosing to be together'. What is being articulated is that legal protection from violence in the home is determined by a cultural acceptance of a one-off act of consent, which is given by agreeing to marry or being in a relationship, and this relationship then assumes consent to accept any behaviour, including violence:

I think if you were to assault someone in the street, or abuse them verbally in the street it would be seen to be a criminal activity. But if someone you know in your own home, whether it is your partner or a family member abuses you then it is just seen to be an argument. It is almost as if because you are in a relationship and that you have agreed to be in a relationship you have given consent to accept what goes with that relationship, even if that is abuse.
[Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

Philippa has illustrated a belief that by agreeing to enter into the relationship the right to negotiate consent was removed, giving a sense of ownership of the woman by the man. This belief of the on-off act of consent is also apparent in the discussion of sexual behaviour in section 5.3, with no recognition of the right to negotiate consent at any time during the relationship. The seriousness of a stranger assault is acknowledged as a crime but similar behaviour is accepted as an argument within an intimate relationship, which carries assumed consent to any behaviour that may follow. There is no recognition of what should be an on-going negotiated agreement to consent to any behaviour within a relationship. This presents the opportunity to limit a woman's autonomy through a sense of ownership in that the man can do with the woman as he pleases. Hague and Malos (2005), amongst others, argue as the

majority of abuse happens in the privacy of the home, the violence remains unnamed and undistinguishable within the familial environment.

Whilst stranger attacks as discussed are predominantly one-off assaults, violence against women in the home involves a pattern of premeditated abuse, which can involve numerous attacks over a period of years (Harne and Radford, 2008; Stark, 2007). This pattern of abusive behaviour becomes normalised and accepted in the relationship, until the violence becomes intolerable or, as Abhijita explains:

It is hard to relate certain things until you are deep into it then something might click with you, or you hear or see something else and that is when the penny starts to drop. Or, if you have children, then they start displaying symptoms as in my case. The teachers knew at my son's school and until something like this happens, it is part and parcel of everyday life. It becomes normalised until somebody actually tells you. [Abhijita, 44yrs, experiential group]

Abhijita highlights that it was not until the violence was made public through the school, that it was then named as domestic violence, and this opened up a route to help-seeking. The findings in this research show that respondents in the experiential group did not recognise abusive behaviour in the early stages of their relationships as domestic violence:

I experienced it because John used to fight. Well I know he had two fights when I was with him. He had a fight with a lad in a pub and he came home and that was it, but then when he came home [gets upset] well he came home and done it to me. [Beth, 27yrs, experiential group]

The violence moved from the public into the private sphere and, while it was acknowledged as a fight outside of the home, the anger and aggression went unrecognised as domestic violence for a number of years. However, Beth also highlighted that even when domestic violence occurs in the public sphere it goes unchallenged as it is 'just a domestic':

People just walk away because it is just a domestic, people just arguing, because I have been through it. Where, if it was two people in the street he would go his way and the other his way but when she gets home and he is sitting waiting for her, then what is going to happen behind a closed door. [Beth, 27yrs, experiential group]

What is being said here, is that the seriousness of domestic violence in heterosexual relationships is not attributed the same outrage or attention by society as stranger attacks, and this is recognised in the figures of the BCS. In order to publically challenge the behaviour, it must be named as domestic violence and recognised as a crime. A respondent in the notional group articulated domestic violence as being hidden or, if heard, would be presumed a one-off:

I think a lot is covered up you know and if it was say happening next door we wouldn't get to know the ins and outs of it. You would think it might be just a one-off thing, you wouldn't know. Well, I wouldn't realise if it had been going on for years because it was in the house. [Linda, 64yrs, notional group]

What is being suggested here is that if violence was heard it would be ignored, as it would be presumed to be a one-off incident. Domestic violence was not recognised as a crime by the notional group as Norma went on to explain:

I think in a relationship it is not so severe a punishment or classed as a severe crime, if it was a crime. [Norma, 57yrs, notional group]

Violence within a relationship does not appear to be thought serious enough to be classed as a crime. The data suggests that by being in a relationship, public definitions and recognition of violence as a crime are lost in the private sphere. A common theme between all 3 groups is that abusive behaviours in a relationship are viewed as a private issue that is viewed as a 'relationship problem' as Jennifer explains:

I don't think people see it as a crime. I think people see it as a relationship problem. I think it is again what happens behind closed doors is nobody else's business. [47yrs, institutional group]

The cultural acceptance of privacy surrounding the home appears to blur the criminal element of violent behaviour within the private sphere. When a person enters an intimate relationship, this makes the distinction between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, dramatically more complex. The notional group articulate acts of domestic violence becoming part of the relationship and were unable to determine what is a crime? The positioning of the experiential group (as above) has enabled an understanding of domestic violence as being seen as an

argument both publically and privately, which leads to tolerance of the behaviours and they become normalised in the privacy of the home. This was substantiated by the institutional group who recognise through their professional positioning that domestic violence is recognised as a relationship problem, a private matter rather than a crime that ultimately prevents the reporting of the violence, and a pathway to help-seeking.

Domestic violence is a myriad of intricate behaviours that can present at a 'low-level', which may include manipulation and control, to a 'higher level' of using extreme violence. This intricacy constructs barriers that prevent women naming the abusive behaviour as a crime and seeking help. Radford and Kelly (1991:26) argue:

Recognising domestic violence is occurring is itself a process involving several steps, and one is recognising the behaviour as abusive.

This highlights the intricacy of behaviours associated with domestic violence and, as illustrated above, recognising the behaviour beyond a relationship problem is in itself complex. The criminal element of physical violence is lost through the acceptance of being in a relationship, as the experiential group were able to highlight. If the seriousness of physical violence is not recognised as a crime within the intimate relationship, then unquestionably other behaviours, which do not attach a label will go unrecognised.

Domestic violence was described by all 3 respondent groups as a relationship problem which, through principles of consent and choice about being in a relationship, would prevent a pathway to help-seeking. Respondents within the notional group did not acknowledge domestic violence as a crime and were speculative in their limited responses. Whilst the institutional group did present a broader understanding of the barriers preventing the reporting of domestic violence, no respondent in that group related to the criminalisation of behaviours through the *Domestic, Crime and Victims Act 2004* (see section 2.3). The data in this section has demonstrated the difficulty of recognising the criminal element of domestic violence, which prevents help-seeking. Domestic violence is complex, and barriers identified in the data that prevent the naming of domestic violence, is to be discussed in the following section.

4.3 Domestic Violence: The complexities of naming it

This section will bring to the fore the complexity of recognising and naming experiences of domestic violence, which ultimately prevents help-seeking. Recognising violent behaviours beyond what is accepted as ‘a relationship problem’ is difficult. The government and support agencies have worked to raise the profile of domestic violence and its associated behaviours in an attempt to educate society (see section 2.3), but there is still an apparent lack of knowledge about what encompasses domestic violence. Physical abuse in the context of actual bodily harm is commonly recognised and acknowledged by the notional, institutional and

experiential groups as articulated in section 4.1, but recognising and naming such behaviour beyond a relationship problem is complex.

It could be argued that the women in the notional group are open to abuse because of the lack of knowledge and understanding of what domestic violence is. LaViolette and Barnett (2000:36) suggest that:

Women raised in non-violent families may not recognise abusive behaviour because they have no frame of reference.

This may provide an explanation for some women, but in contradiction this research has found that abusive behaviour can go unrecognised as it becomes normalised through part of previous living. For example, it was found in the narrative that a respondent in the institutional group had grown up in a violent family environment, but did not recognise it as domestic violence, as the behaviour had become normalised in the home:

I have been through this with my mam and dad when I was young, and it is only since I have been doing this job that I at last realised it was domestic violence. I thought that's how people lived and my dad would go to hit my mam and I would have to pull him off. But at that time you just thought that is all part of married life.
[Jennifer 47yrs, Institutional group]

Professional knowledge enabled the naming of the personal experiences as domestic violence for Jennifer, which otherwise could have remained unrecognised and unnamed. The data illustrates that the discourses of 'being part of married life',

or 'being in a relationship' is blurring the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the intimate relationship. The non-recognition of domestic violence constructs a barrier that prevents the behaviour being named, challenged and support networks being utilised. If domestic violence is not understood it cannot be named, thus preventing early intervention. This is an area that needs to be challenged publically to raise awareness of the barrier that prevents the naming of behaviours as domestic violence.

It was highlighted in the quantitative phase that fewer than 50% of respondents would seek help following incidents of domestic violence (see section 3.8.4); therefore, respondents were asked why they thought this was the case. Identified in the narrative was a tolerance of physical abuse depending on the severity of the act, For example:

Well, I think it depends on circumstances and depending how serious the assault was. I mean if it was just a quick slap across the face or something like that, I think probably you wouldn't seek help. [Norma 57yrs, notional group]

This relationship between the degree of severity, which leads to tolerance was also evident in the narratives of the institutional and experiential groups. However, it was only Norma in the notional group who articulated it explicitly. A scale of severity regarding physical abuse was also described by Susan in the institutional group, but this knowledge related to a personal, historical experience of domestic violence:

I probably only recognised it quite high up the scale if you can have a scale of domestic violence, but quite severe full-on violent acts. I think I probably wouldn't have thought it very nice if someone was bullying their partner, but I don't know if I would have put it under the heading of domestic violence. [Susan 23yrs, institutional group]

This raises the issue as to what point or level of physical violence does the behaviour start to become questioned as unacceptable within a relationship. Within the public sphere, violent behaviour between strangers would instantly be named unacceptable or a criminal act. Another respondent in the institutional group articulated that a level of physical violence could be put up with until the violence intensified but, as to when other behaviour was serious enough to seek help, was questioned:

If it is physical violence, it probably would be the worst hiding you have had in your life, but if it is other issues, there must be something, that just snaps and you decide that I can't take anymore. I don't know at what point you would come to that [seek help]. [Pauline, 54yrs, institutional group]

It is presumed the narrative was articulated through Pauline's professional knowledge as, further in this section (see p:221), the respondent illustrates what could be named as an episode of physical violence within her relationship. However, what is being said by Pauline here is that a severe beating might be expected, before help is sought in response to physical violence. The physical element of domestic violence can start at a low-level with the odd slap, push or shove, and a promise that it will not happen again (Mooney, 2000). However,

unfortunately, in the majority of incidents, this does happen again, and over time becomes more frequent and severe, as discussed in chapter two.

Whilst respondents in the experiential group articulated a level of severity and tolerance in the narrative, their positioning enables them to highlight how the low-level behaviour becomes normalised in everyday life:

I can understand that completely because I think also you go through years and years of like low-level abuse and actually it becomes the norm. You accept it as part of your relationship. I always relate it to like a roller coaster where we had all these highs and it was all wonderful and everything was fantastic and we were the best family ever and then bang it was right down the bottom. [Philippa, 43yrs, experiential group]

Philippa, through her subjective positioning, illustrates how low-level behaviours over a period of time can become normalised; this then forms an acceptance of them within the relationship. The experiential group were also able to present a broader understanding of the barriers preventing help-seeking once the behaviour was named. Abhijita explained that, through emotional and sexual abuse, she experienced she came to believe she was the person her abusive husband wanted her to be:

Depending on what's happened and what has been part and parcel like the sexual aspect of it, and the drug aspect of it, it's not something you want to admit you have done. Because they bring you down to such a level you just have no self-respect, no confidence and you actually believe you are that person. It takes a lot to actually get to a point where you think hold on a minute

I know I am better than this. [Abhijita, 44yrs, experiential group]

What is being illustrated here is the 'distortion of her subjective reality' (Kirkwood 1993), in that Abhijita came to believe she was 'that person', and that prevented help-seeking. Having gone through domestic violence, the experiential group were able to reflect on the broader issues, which prevent the naming of behaviours as domestic violence, and ultimately a pathway to help-seeking, which was not recognised by the notional or institutional groups. There is illustrated by all 3 groups however, a relationship between the level of severity and tolerance of behaviours, which present the possibility of preventing help-seeking. However, it is suggested in the narrative of both the institutional and experiential groups that violent episodes have not been named as domestic violence, as the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol. This foregrounds a gendered acceptance of how some men will behave when intoxicated within the heterosexual relationship that normalises and prevents the naming of violent behaviour as domestic violence.

The discourse around alcohol and domestic violence is an area that Galvani (2001) argues lacks in-depth academic study. While alcohol has been recognised as a key factor in the use of violence within the public sphere, it has not received the same attention within the private sphere (Galvani, 2001). The Home Office (2003) acknowledged in the *Safety and Justice* paper that there is a clear link between alcohol misuse and episodes of domestic violence. However, only:

32% of survivors had reported that their attacker had been drinking when the domestic violence took place (Home Office, 2003:19).

As discussed (see chapter two) this is contested by Women's Aid (2010) who argue, men are also abusive without alcohol intoxication. However, Collins, et al, (1997:387) argue:

That alcohol is a correlation of some violence for male against female domestic violence.

It is illustrated in this research that violence has occurred whilst men have been under the influence of alcohol. However, it is also evident in the narrative of Philippa (below) that there were also violent episodes when her husband had not been drinking.

The ideology of the 'partner just being drunk' (see below) when a man has been abusive was articulated by the notional, institutional and experiential groups. This suggests any abuse that may be experienced by the respondents happened or could happen because partners had consumed or may consume alcohol. As one participant in the experiential group reflects:

I didn't think he was being abusive, I thought he was just being drunk. I didn't think that I was experiencing domestic violence because I thought it was fuelled by the drink, and because he was rarely violent or abusive when he wasn't drinking. But then in the end he was rarely sober and I just accepted it. [Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

The alcohol provided a backdrop for the violence to be accepted as part of everyday life within Philippa's relationship. It was accepted as it was understood as her partner being drunk. However, it is illustrated in the narrative that he had been violent on occasions when not under the influence of alcohol, but the behaviour went unrecognised. A participant in the institutional group who stated at the beginning of the interview that she had never experienced domestic violence in her relationship, went on to say:

My husband had been out, he was a good drinker and it was a bank holiday Monday. We started arguing and I had a back yard then and he had me pinned against the wall by my throat. He had never ever done it before and my son witnessed it, he was holding onto him saying don't hit my mam, so he went to bed (husband). He still drinks now, but if he is nasty now my son is there and he is six foot four now. [Pauline 54yrs, institutional group]

This episode was not named as domestic violence by Pauline who works in frontline service provision during the interview. However, at the time of the incident, it is apparent Pauline thought the incident to be a form of domestic violence:

I didn't seek help especially working in housing, well I didn't want to be labelled a victim. [Pauline, 53yrs, institutional group]

Pauline suggests she did not seek help through the stigma of being labelled a victim, and this prevented her seeking help in response to the incident. Pauline names physically abusive behaviour professionally, as a form of domestic violence, but does not act on that within her personal relationship. However, it could be

argued that the behaviour is a form of common couple violence, which Johnson (1995:285) suggests is:

One in which conflict occasionally gets out of hand leading to 'minor' forms of violence, and more rarely escalates to serious forms of violence.

Johnson (1995) points out that common couple violence recognises that women are just as likely to commit an abusive act as well as their male counterpart. Pauline did substantiate this claim stating:

My husband has suffered it off me because I have chucked all sorts at him. [Pauline, 53yrs, institutional group]

The episode of physical violence Pauline experienced from her husband was articulated as an isolated incident with no other act of physical violence mentioned, which is identified within the definition of common couple violence. The act of physical violence by Pauline's husband however, does parallel with feminist and government definitions of what constitutes domestic violence, as discussed in chapter two. However, the physical assault experienced by Pauline was explained and tolerated through alcohol intoxication and not defined as an episode of domestic violence publically, as articulated above.

This normalisation appears to excuse men's drinking habits and the violent behaviour that may follow. Galvani (2001) found men often blame their violent behaviour on the consumption of alcohol or being drunk. Acceptance of this

ideology by partners then normalises or isolates the abuse leading to an acceptance within the relationship, as a respondent in the institutional group explained:

Women don't realise they are living in a domestic violence relationship, they just think that is what happens on a Friday night because he has had a drink. They don't realise they are in that sort of relationship. This is just normal to them. [Christine 49yrs, institutional group]

Christine's reflection articulates a normalisation of violent behaviour, as what happens within that specific relationship when alcohol has been consumed. The narrative of both the institutional and experiential groups identifies an acceptance of a certain level of physical abuse, which is inflicted during intoxication but the behaviour is not named as domestic violence. The notional group however, made no reference to alcohol and violent behaviour, other than Norma who suggested,

I do think alcohol is a problem in domestic violence, well in a majority of cases definitely. It really is, if you cut alcohol out of the equation, it would cut it by 3 quarters I think, definitely. [Norma, 57yrs, notional group]

This respondent works in the local hospital and the positioning of her knowledge may relate to her professional remit. There is a belief in the narrative that alcohol is a key factor in men being violent towards women. However, it is evident in the literature and in this research that men are also abusive when they have not consumed alcohol. The abusive behaviour can become normalised and minimised within relationships putting women at risk of domestic violence.

It is evident in the narratives of all 3 respondent groups that naming physical violence within the heterosexual relationship as domestic violence is complex. The data identified a level of severity that prevented the naming of violent behaviour. The positioning of the experiential group enabled them to highlight the impact alcohol had on preventing the naming of domestic violence and this was substantiated by the institutional group. However, the notional group did not relate any abusive behaviour being hidden through the use of alcohol other than Norma, who believed alcohol was an influencing factor for acts of domestic violence by men. Recognising and naming abusive behaviour beyond a relationship problem is complex as discussed. However, to add to this intricacy coercion and manipulation is brought to the fore in the next section.

4.4 Coercion and manipulation, or is it men just taking an interest?

The knowledge of all 3 respondent groups commonly highlight the non-recognition of psychological or emotional abuse within the heterosexual relationship. In this thesis, psychological abuse will be encompassed under the term emotional abuse as the data relates to controlling and manipulative behaviour, which was referred to in terms of the emotional well-being of women. The analysis of the data in this section was understood in terms of the work of Kirkwood (1993) and Stark (2007, 2012), that offer a definition and understanding of emotional abuse as discussed in chapter two. The knowledge of the 3 respondent groups present different levels of understanding of what emotional abuse is, which is not surprising given the limited knowledge the notional group had in defining domestic violence (see section 4.1).

However, there is also another common theme between the 3 groups of a cultural normalisation of emotional abuse through gendered expectations within heterosexual relationships.

Non-recognition of emotional abuse appears to be influenced through a continuum of low-level behaviours that can become grounded in abusive relationships. The behaviours are then normalised through what appears to be cultural and gendered expectations, thus preventing help-seeking. The discussion in this section will identify and discuss the barriers that prevent the emotional abuse from being challenged. Key themes that emerged during the analysis, which are to be discussed in this section, are a continuum of emotional abuse, gendered and cultural normalisation, acts of altruism, coercion and manipulation.

Emotional abuse is multi-dimensional (Kirkwood, 1993), and I would argue behaviours are difficult to define, as there is no label to attach as there is with physical violence (see section 4.1). As discussed in chapter two, Stark (2007) recognised the 'micromanagement' of women in their everyday lives as influenced through coercive control, and Kirkwood (1993) identified a conceptual framework to understand emotional abuse, two of which have been identified in this research: objectification and a distortion of a woman's subjective reality, as illustrated in the previous section. The component of objectification is identified in the narrative of the notional and experiential groups in this section. The distortion of a woman's subjective reality is articulated by both the experiential and institutional groups.

As in the work of Kirkwood (1993), and Stark (2007) I would argue control and manipulation give impetus to the distortion of a woman's subjective reality, through 'micromanagement' by an abusive partner, and this has been illustrated in the previous sections in the narrative of the experiential group. These elements together slowly construct a normalisation that becomes difficult to break down, reinforced through the emotional engagement that is invested in relationships by women.

It is commonly acknowledged that physical violence inflicts injury, and for some women, serious harm that can result in death. Emotional or psychological abuse may not have the physical or visual evidence of actual bodily harm, but it has long lasting effects that some women do not recover from (Kirkwood 1993; Stark, 2007, 2012). Following analysis of the on-line survey it was found that some behaviours linked to emotional abuse were not identified by participants as domestic violence. Therefore, respondents were asked in the fieldwork, why behaviour such as being told how to dress, or how to do your hair, was not recognised or named as a form of domestic violence.

Respondents in all 3 knowledge groups articulate a level of awareness of behaviour that could be called low-level emotional abuse, but for many the behaviour was minimised or not recognised. For instance, in terms of being told what to wear Linda spoke of it as a form of control, but the link was not made to domestic violence:

That would not be domestic violence, would it? I have never even thought about it. You hear of people going out shopping for their wives and they may say, put that on, or I have heard them say you are not putting that on

it is too short. But that is like a control freak. I didn't think it would be classed as domestic violence. [Linda, 64yrs, notional group]

The act was recognised as a form of control but the man's behaviour was explained as him being a 'control freak', minimising the act. It was not named as a form of domestic violence by the notional or the majority of the institutional groups, as illustrated in section 4.1, Linda [64yrs, notional group] went on to explain:

I think it is just different individuals and their outlook on life really they just take it for granted. If they go out shopping she probably stands back and lets him pick the clothes, as it has probably happened over the years. You are just used to it and it is just part of the routine really.

Linda articulates a passive role by the woman, as the behaviour becomes normalised through being part of the routine within the relationship. Such low-level, manipulative and controlling behaviours associated with how a man wants 'his' woman to look, highlights ownership and how the male wants to objectify 'his' woman. Jones and Schechter (1992) point out, that this type of abuse has characters of financial and material constraint that slowly devalues a woman's role in the relationship. This use of coercive control by men is used to 'micromanage women's enactment of everyday life' (Stark, 2007:171). Such behaviour can have a stand-alone impetus that becomes normalised as part of the relationship routine (as Linda articulates) or manipulation through power and control, which can lead to an escalation of other forms of domestic violence.

Manipulation is complex and, as illustrated in this research, becomes normal routine as women change their external appearance through demands by, and for the pleasure and desire of their partner. Women then lose sight of their subjective reality, as they substitute their partner's for theirs. Acts of manipulation in relation to what women wear were explained away by the notional group, as men being protective of women with no recognition of it as a form of control:

They (partner) are being protective over you because they don't want anyone else to look at you and it makes them feel safe if they tell you what to wear. [Chelsea, 19yrs, notional group]

If someone (woman) dresses inappropriately they (partner) might think they are going to go out to do something with somebody else. [Amy, 21yrs, notional group]

Chelsea and Amy [notional group] are within the high risk group⁷ for domestic violence, and neither of the young women acknowledged this behaviour could constitute domestic violence. Amy has suggested issues of trust that can lead to control, but for Chelsea it was accepted as a partner being protective presenting an act of chivalry. The cultural acceptance of this ideology, as Jennifer explains, may stem from childhood:

When teenagers are growing up sometimes your dad will say 'I don't want you going out like that'. I suppose it is just seen as an extension of that. [Jennifer 47yrs, institutional group]

⁷ Young women aged 16-24 years old are most at risk of domestic abuse (see, BCS 2009).

The dialogue refers to a dominant protective father figure, which is acknowledged as a culturally accepted role by the man of the house. Research shows that:

Girls often have difficulty demarcating control and lack of trust from protectiveness and care (Girlguiding, 2013:7).

However, it is unknown if the blurring of the boundaries between, care and control within their early relationships, is linked to what Jennifer identifies as an extension of fatherly concern.

There does appear to be however, an acceptance of the man's view of the world in adulthood, which limits individual autonomy for women. Ultimately, in heterosexual abusive relationships, this cultural and gendered normalisation enables the manipulation and control of women through an acceptance of male entitlement. Indeed, Stark (2007) argues coercive control is used to ensure a position of childlike reliance on the abuser.

What is apparent in the narrative of Chelsea and Amy is a normalisation of the behaviour by excusing it with reference to discourses of jealousy and the risk of infidelity. They suggest that conformity to a partner's wishes gives reassurance of faithfulness. However, this could slowly distort their subjective reality, which has the possibility to lead to total control. The structures of emotional abuse encompass elements of control in many ways that are difficult to recognise as domestic violence. The acceptance of the 'micromanagement' of women (Stark, 2007:274)

through the ideology of men being protective over their partner and the partner wanting to please builds a normalisation of what is objectified behaviour. This gentle manipulation constructs an emotional base of power that justifies the behaviour through a desire for women to conform and please their partner:

I think the how to dress thing is well, women do say to their partners, how do I look? Because they always want to please him, and you know the men do say you look awful in that or you look nice in that, and the women always want to please the man. [Christine, 49yrs, institutional group]

This apparent willingness by women to please a partner can in turn present a naive vulnerability to a risk of further abuse through the non-recognition of abusive behaviours. The willingness to please men highlights altruistic behaviour, as women put the partner's needs before their own.

Acts of altruistic behaviour by women were articulated by respondents, in saying that, by wearing what a male partner wants you to, makes partners feel safe regardless of a woman's own personal feelings or needs. However, altruistic behaviour presents the opportunity of a continuum of control by abusive male partners. Also illustrated in the narrative is the 'micromanagement' of women (Stark, 2007) that prevents the recognition of control, ownership and the act of objectification being challenged. The loss of autonomy goes unrecognised, as the man's needs become paramount and the act of altruism by the woman gives acceptance to any abusive behaviour. Kirkwood (1993:51) suggests:

Women become incapacitated from expressing or acknowledging their own needs through the intensity at which objectification can be enacted.

Commonly, all 3 respondent groups suggested a man taking an interest in his partner was a positive thing. This ideology appears to be embedded in culturally accepted, gendered roles where it is identified as a man being 'protective', (see p:185), and a woman 'wanting to please' (see p:187). Respondents in the notional group reframed what can be seen as acts of subservience, as behaviours meant to please a male partner and reassure him of her fidelity reflects ownership. While this behaviour may appear caring and comforting initially, there is the risk of a greater level of control emerging:

I think on a small level, a pleasant level, a man taking an interest in what a woman wears is so rare it is seen as a good thing. It can be quite comforting to be in that controlled environment sometimes. That tense interest in what you are wearing, or that I don't want any other man looking at my woman is kind of reassuring in some sense. I think when it gets to a certain point you may not recognise it as past that. [Susan 23yrs, institutional group]

Susan points out the complexity of recognising when what is articulated as 'a man taking an interest' becomes a form of control, and ultimately naming the behaviour as domestic violence. It is apparent in all 3 groups of gendered expectations within heterosexual relationships, in which respondents acknowledge a need to please, if a man is taking an interest. As this interest is identified as a rare occurrence by men,

then acceptance of subordination is apparent, with no recognition of objectification or control. Kirkwood (1993:50) argues:

This indicates to women that they are viewed as objects with no inner energy, resources, needs or desires.

Objectification is hidden within abusive relationships, and as the data suggests it becomes normalised through the ideology, of women wanting to please and the emotional investment in the relationship. This becomes accepted as routine or to keep the peace as Abhijita explains:

He would say 'I don't think you should cut your hair', or 'you shouldn't have your hair down wear it up'. You might be uncomfortable with it but then you're at a point where if it's making him happy you go along with it and eventually it is falling into that routine. [Abhijita 44yrs, experiential group]

The discourse of routine is again articulated, which normalises the habituation of the behaviour. This illustrates that the desire to make a man happy through altruism changes the woman's subjective reality and, as Abhijita illustrated, 'you eventually believe you are that person'. This 'distortion of reality' (Kirkwood, 1993) through 'micromanagement' increases their vulnerability and risk of a higher level of abuse (Stark 2007), as was the case with Abhijita and other respondents in this research. This misinterpretation of such male behaviours of power and control prevents the recognition of emotional abuse as domestic violence. Kirkwood (1993) found that abusers identified vulnerabilities in women to engage in further manipulation. For

respondents in the experiential group, there was a familiar pattern of conformity to male practices of emotional manipulation, as Abhijita discussed above.

As identified in the narrative of the notional group above, it is the element of coercion and manipulation by men that gives impetus to altruism, through the subservience of women into wearing certain things to please a husband/partner. However, this behaviour by male partners was not recognised as manipulative or abusive by the notional group. This behaviour can be identified with the ownership and objectification of a woman by a man but, the behaviour was understood and accepted through relationship routine and an expectation of a need to please. Acceptance of these behaviours normalises such acts in abusive relationships as just part of everyday life, blurring the boundary of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

The institutional group explained acts of manipulation as being understood in the early stages of a relationship, as a relationship problem:

A lot of the survivors who we work with will say 'oh well it started when he said he didn't want me to wear a certain thing'. I don't think they recognise it as control and I don't think people see it as a crime. I think people see it as a relationship problem. [Marie 32yrs, institutional group]

The institutional group articulated their knowledge of emotional abuse from professional positioning. The group articulated that survivors, upon reflection, knew

being told what to wear had resulted in them taking on a victim role, with conformity becoming automatic, which in turn normalised the behaviour:

I guess the woman would know whether the man would be happy in the way she dresses. Maybe it would only have to happen a couple of times and the woman may be in a victim role. They may just automatically dress in a way that their partner would want them to without actually seeing it as a form of control, it is quite a tricky one. [Rose 52yrs, institutional group]

The narratives illustrate the complexities of emotional abuse and the underlying continuum of the components, which implement barriers to recognition. A cultural acceptance of the need for women to please men prevents an understanding of how to differentiate between what is positive and negative emotional investment in their relationships. The normalisation of objectification for some women then enables the continuum of emotional abuse to move to another level or, as a respondent (below) stated, 'escalate':

I keep going back to it but it is that thing where it starts off very, very mild. It starts off with, do you like this, try a different colour, and it escalates to, I don't think you look good in that, or you look too fat in that. But then you are at a point where, if it's making him happy, you go along with it. [Abhijita 44yrs, experiential group]

What becomes evident is the low-level manipulation at the onset of the relationship, which strengthened the emotional investment by women through the male taking an interest. This was accepted through a cultural normalisation of gendered expectations within the relationship. Unquestionably, this gave impetus to objectification by subservience and acts of altruism by the respondent, which then

enabled a greater level of control and emotional abuse through verbal insult as articulated by Abhijita.

The 3 respondent groups have articulated accepting controlling and manipulative behaviour as routine, which becomes normalised as part of everyday life, with no element of emotional abuse challenged. It is evident that the notional group have no knowledge about the risk of escalation of such behaviours to a higher level of abuse, which was highlighted by the positioning of the institutional and experiential groups. The loss of individual autonomy of women went unchallenged in all 3 groups and the narrative articulated a cultural expectation of a woman's role in pleasing a man in heterosexual relationships. Thus, the acts of altruistic behaviour by the respondents are unrecognised and unchallenged.

4.5 Summary

It is evident the positioning of each group presented a difference in their knowledge of what they perceive domestic violence to be, influenced through their social, personal or professional positioning. The narrative highlights how the groups define and understand domestic violence slightly, and at times, dramatically differently depending on their knowledge. This point is to be given further attention in chapter seven as understanding domestic violence ultimately impacts on and prevents help-seeking. However, regardless of the respondent group, it is illustrated that women in this research did not understand the full extent of domestic violence and its intricate nature. The respondents in the notional group predominantly understood

domestic violence to be physical abuse. This narrow understanding of domestic violence has resulted in some women living with abusive behaviour, and this was revealed in the narratives of the experiential group in this chapter. Respondents in the experiential group however, upon reflection of their experiences, now understand the intricacy of the element of control, which the other 2 groups on the whole did not have.

The findings highlight that an act of physical violence in the public sphere is instantly named as a criminal act but, in the private sphere it is re-defined as a relationship problem. This highlights the complexity of domestic violence, and the production of cultural expectations and norms that create barriers against naming it, and potential help-seeking. The acknowledgement of physical abuse as actual bodily harm is recognised by all 3 groups, but there is a lack of recognition of other aspects such as sexual, emotional and financial abuse, more so by the notional group and this is to be discussed further in chapter five. Mooney (2000) has argued that some women may not be aware they are experiencing domestic violence, and ultimately this leaves many women vulnerable to further assaults. This was recognised in this research, with respondents in the experiential and institutional group who identified that initially they were unaware that what they were experiencing was domestic violence. This presents vulnerability for the women in the notional group.

Aspects of emotional abuse were articulated by some respondents in both the institutional and experiential groups as problematic in terms of being able to

evidence it. However, the notional group had limited knowledge, and on the whole, were speculative as to what domestic violence was. It was also evident the notional group minimised the use of controlling behaviour as it was understood as routine, or a partner being protective or there was a risk of infidelity. Upon reflection however, the experiential group now named what they had experienced as being controlled and a form of domestic violence, but this was only after the behaviour became public. The institutional group highlighted that women believed it to be a relationship problem rather than domestic violence, which needed outside intervention and this was substantiated by the notional and experiential groups.

I would argue, as does Wilcox (2006), that emotional abuse cannot be separated from other aspects of domestic violence. Emotional abuse is also identified as having lasting, damaging effects on women, which are more harmful than physical violence (Kirkwood 1993; Stark, 2007, 2012). The data illustrates that recognising and naming behaviour associated with domestic violence is imperative in enabling women to access help-seeking intervention to change their situation. However, even after abusive behaviours are named as domestic violence, there are apparent barriers that prevent women seeking help, and this is to be discussed in chapter five.

Chapter Five

Barriers to help-seeking: Gendered and Cultural Norms

This chapter illustrates the barriers that were identified in the narrative of the 3 groups that prevent or silence knowledge about abusive behaviours; which then prevents a pathway to help-seeking in response to domestic violence. The barriers to be discussed in this chapter are that of fear, which increases feelings of emotional distress by women, it will discuss the impact of love, which blurs the boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the intimate heterosexual relationship. It also includes the influence of male entitlement and ownership that is grounded in gendered expectations of heterosexuality, and a cultural acceptance that normalises domestic violence within the intimate relationship. Such gendered expectations give impetus to male entitlement of sexual gratification, and issues of ownership through coercive control (Stark, 2007, 2009), within abusive heterosexual relationships. The findings also suggest a continuum of male entitlement, this entitlement is found in financial arrangements and allocation of decision making in relation to joint resources.

One of the common questions asked of women experiencing domestic violence; is why doesn't she leave? A misconception is that it is easy for a woman to leave an abusive relationship and, as Harne and Radford (2010:46) state, 'it is one of the main myths about domestic violence'. It was identified in chapter four that defining and naming behaviour associated with domestic violence is complex however, once

the behaviour is named, seeking help is not straightforward. There are many factors that prevent a pathway to help-seeking and this has been identified in the narratives of all 3 respondent groups.

This chapter is shaped around the key themes that emerged during the analysis of the data of the notional, institutional and experiential groups. The themes include fear, such as a fear of being and managing alone, the impact of love, the influence of gendered and cultural expectations of male sexual entitlement in heterosexual relationships, a continuum of male entitlement that enables financial control and privacy in the home, which silences abusive behaviour, which ultimately prevents a help-seeking.

5.1 Coping alone: A fear of leaving the relationship

This section discusses fear, which was identified as a barrier to seeking help by all 3 groups regardless of social, professional or personal experience. The emotional investment women bring to intimate heterosexual relationships enables abusive men to instil an increased level of fear on women emotionally. Fear can be instilled in women through acts of continuous harassment and threats of physical abuse by abusive men (Kirkwood, 1993; Wilcox, 2006), which in turn makes them fearful of leaving the relationship in case of reprisals. However, the key themes identified in this research are a fear of having nowhere to go or how to manage alone. This ultimately constructs a barrier that prevents women changing their situation.

The notional, institutional and experiential groups articulated feelings of fear in terms of having to leave the family home, or having to start again, and being fearful of ending the relationship. The notional group could only speculate what the barriers could be, but the narrative was reiterated by respondents in both the institutional and experiential groups:

I think some people are frightened to leave their home or they are just frightened to get help. They may not know where to go to for help, I wouldn't. They may be frightened of their partner altogether and just put up with it. [Linda, 64yrs, notional group]

Fear gives stimulus to a feeling of powerlessness, and this was suggested by Linda in terms of her speculating that women would not know where to go to seek help. Also speculated in the narrative is that women may put up with violence through the fear of reprisals by a partner, which reflects the 'component of fear' in the work of Kirkwood (1993:53). This fear leads to powerlessness, which breaks down confidence until there is low self-esteem and the perpetrator has total control. Fear can lead to the continuation of emotional abuse through feelings of powerlessness, which can have lasting, long-term effects (Kirkwood 1993; Wilcox, 2006). The notional group also articulated a fear of bringing the violence into the public sphere, for example:

They [women] might be too afraid really in case they couldn't cope with things or have nowhere else to go. They [women] might be frightened to say anything to anyone else and bring it all out in the open. [Alice, 64yrs, notional group]

This narrative relates to the discourse around privacy in the home that hides and silences domestic violence, thus preventing it coming to public attention. Those in the notional group speculate that through a fear of the unknown, women choose to stay. However, the element of fear can impact on a woman's emotional well-being with the possibility of increasing anxiety and panic attacks (Harne & Radford, 2008) due to the silencing of abusive behaviour. The institutional group raised concerns about women fearing being on their own because they have become dependent on the male partner and the impact this may have on children as articulated below:

They [male partner] are the main breadwinner and there is the fear of where am I going to go? What is going to happen to my children? What am I going to live on, all of that. [Pauline, 54yrs, institutional group]

Both the notional and institutional groups explained the impact of fear in terms of where women would go and how they would cope being alone. Pauline also articulated a fear of economic hardship that links with the component of 'deprivation' (Kirkwood, 1993). Ultimately, fear consists of many elements, which influence the continuum of emotional anxiety and, for the respondents in this research, fear of coping alone, about where to get help and how to bring the violence into the public domain were all spoken about. Fear reflects anxieties about disruption (Murray, 2008), and can become a factor of why women stay. Emotional abuse experienced through fear is silenced by a gendered, societal acceptance that women manage the emotion within the heterosexual family unit and take on this burden for the family (Lloyd, , 2000; Wilcox 2006). This then imposes a barrier to the women seeking help and support in changing their situation.

A study carried out by Wilcox (2006:103) on survivors of domestic violence found that elements of fear:

Fell into three categories: fear of the future, fear of further violence and fears caused by the new environment they had been rehoused to.

The findings reflect those elements through a fear of a new environment in terms of where they might live. Respondents in the experiential group expressed fear of a risk of further violence, a fear of rebuilding their life and additionally themselves as a single person, which suggests a 'fear of the future':

It is the fear in what do you do? Particularly if you are in a long-term relationship you then not only rebuild your life but rebuild yourself as well. I think a lot for me, a lot of how I identified myself is always being associated with being with a partner. [Philippa, 43yrs, experiential group]

What is articulated here is the concern of fear about what happens after leaving the relationship, rather than the imminent fear of further violence from the perpetrator. Cultural expectations of coupledness, the nuclear family and the religious beliefs of Philippa meant changing that subjective reality to being a single person/mother, this association heightened emotional anxiety. Increased emotional anxiety was also evident in terms of having to rebuild not only her life, but that of her children. Emotional harm can also stay with women years after the abusive relationship has ended, as Abhijita [46yrs, experiential group] explained:

It is the fear of losing everything if there are kids involved and family involved. There is a fear your family might not believe you and the threat of leaving, as well as my ex threatened to come after us. He said he had people he knew in the area who would take the kids and I lived with that fear for years.

Whilst there is a fear of the future and not being believed what is also explained here is a fear of further abuse after the relationship ended, through a risk to her children. The element of fear is highlighted by all 3 respondent groups as a barrier to help-seeking. While fear of further abuse is evident it is predominantly based on what happens if the woman leaves the relationship rather than on a fear of further abuse if the woman remains in the home. This relates to financial and material security for the family and the family becomes paramount. The experiential group however, was also able to identify the difficulty of having to rebuild their life, including a new identity as a single woman/mother, which was not found in the narratives of the notional and institutional groups.

Fear presents as an element of emotional abuse and it is a key factor in domestic violence. If the elements of fear could be recognised and named at the onset of low-level abuse, this may then enable preventative measures against further abuse. However, the element of fear is not a lone barrier; it is just one component amongst others identified in this chapter. The impact of feelings of love for the male partner appeared to blur the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the heterosexual relationship.

5.2 Love: Blurring the boundaries

This section focuses on the aspect of love within heterosexual relationships as it was articulated by the institutional and experiential groups, as an influencing factor in the acceptance of, not only low-level but, in some cases, extreme domestic violence. Love was not articulated as a barrier to help-seeking by any member of the notional group. Yet, it became apparent in the discourse in this section that love was only recognised as a barrier to help-seeking by the experiential group once the abusive behaviour had been named and brought into the public sphere. The knowledge of the institutional group was positioned through their professional roles. It is also apparent that the knowledge of the institutional and experiential groups are recognised through gendered expectations that culturally normalise and silence abusive behaviour.

In this section, love is identified as a barrier preventing women from breaking free from an abusive relationship. This barrier is influenced by apparent gendered expectations of women to emotionally manage the heterosexual relationship, with women putting the needs of their husband/partner before themselves. This section sets out the definition and understanding of love, and the impact love has on preventing help-seeking in response to domestic violence. Such barriers include cultural and gendered expectations, emotional investment in the heterosexual relationship, and the impact of love on the silence and secrecy surrounding abuse within the intimate relationship.

Defining love is complex as there are many meanings that relate to both 'subjects and objects' (Fraser, 2008:16) as discussed in chapter two. The understanding of love in this chapter is the focus on being in love romantically and the performing of acts that are termed passionate, which enforce the depth of emotion in the relationship. Love embraces intimate relationships with societal expectations of marriage for heterosexual couples who then take on gendered roles. Society asserts the normality of such gender roles in which monogamous, heterosexual relationships are expected to:

Produce lasting happiness, which underestimates the possibility of abuse in 'the family' (Wood 2001:276).

Existing literature, as discussed in chapter two, argues this cultural normalisation of expected gendered roles within the intimate heterosexual relationship leaves many women in pursuit of the perfect love affair. These expected gendered roles are learnt by children and are pursued by most into adulthood. A respondent in the institutional group illustrated how young people express physical displays of love, which goes unrecognised as abusive through cultural and gendered norms and expectations. A cultural acceptance of childhood physical behaviour is displayed by young adults and understood as a display of love:

In terms of younger people, when they are outside and he is sort of twisting her arm, or giving her a bit more of a push than is just a nice push, and she is responding to it in a quite jocular manner, that is very much based on the 'he must love me because he hits me'. [Theresa, 60yrs Institutional group]

The data here suggests that there is a cultural acceptance of boys being physical, boisterous and playful and this gendered expectation is normalised in society. This behaviour, entwined with feelings of what are labelled as love, then presents the possibility of blurring the boundaries of what are, and what are not acceptable behaviours, which otherwise would not be tolerated if experienced by a stranger in the public domain (see Weiss, 2009). Gendered expectations of male behaviour as physical is culturally-grounded, and this provides a back-drop for the acceptance and normalisation of abusive behaviour by men (Weiss, 2009).

Such gendered and cultural norms have resulted in abusive behaviours remaining very much hidden or put-up-with in heterosexual relationships. Love and the emotions invested in the relationship prevent the challenging of the perpetrator's behaviour as articulated by Susan [23yrs, institutional group]:

It is the love aspect of it, because if you love someone very much and you have that bond with them, there is that eternal hope that it is going to get better. It is going to be good like it was in the beginning.

The discourse of love acts to silence the subject of abusive behaviour within the relationship in the hope the abuse will stop. Susan had experienced domestic violence and it is possible the narrative is articulated through her personal experience. De Beauvoir (1997) identified that love can be dangerous for women as it strengthens emotional responsibility in the relationship and this can be intentionally manipulated by male partners. The emotional investment in the

relationship identified as feelings of love are preventing the behaviour being challenged:

As I said before, people think this is married life and also that you don't hate or want to get the other person taken off to prison. They actually still do love them at the end of the day. [Jennifer, 47yrs, institutional group]

What is being said here by Jennifer, is the belief this is 'what happens in a relationship' (chapter four) normalising the behaviour, which offers protection to the perpetrator as the abuse goes unchallenged through emotional investment. The word 'love' attaches' emotional feeling and a sense of security, which can then be used by men as an emotional control mechanism (see Donovan and Hester, 2010; Lloyd,, 2000). Lloyd, (2000) argues that love and abuse can coexist, but the occurrence of both positive and negative behaviours makes recognising the behaviour as abusive difficult.

The feeling of love felt by a woman for her abuser appears to blur the reality and severity of the abusive behaviour. Respondents in both the experiential and institutional group refer to a tolerance or putting-up-with abusive behaviour, which becomes normalised and accepted within the relationship. This then implements a barrier against the process of external help-seeking. For example:

I could have put up with it, I don't know why, but I could have easily put up with it because you do, you love them. But I thought, no I am pregnant and when I was 3 months pregnant, I first went into a woman's refuge. [Jessica, 30yrs, experiential group]

Jessica did return to her abusive partner because of feelings of isolation and the fear of being alone, which was given impetus by the love she felt for her partner.

Lloyd, (2000:20) argues that:

Romance is at the heart of the tendency to forgive and remain in a violent relationship, especially when it is framed as something that can conquer all relational problems.

Seeking help in response to domestic violence has also been articulated as problematic, as a woman would have to report the man they are in love with:

Because I love him I would be 'what have you done to us' and I think it would change the whole relationship, but I couldn't prosecute him. I know I couldn't go to the police because of loving someone. [Beth, 28yrs, experiential group]

Beth explained that she would protect her partner from prosecution through her love for him and this is illustrated further in section 5.4. The emotional investment in the relationship has given momentum to the silence and secrecy and, consequently, the abusive behaviour can remain hidden. This ultimately leaves the survivor at greater risk and the perpetrator in control:

If you love somebody even though they are horrible to you, but you have feelings for them, I think it is much harder to report it. [Rose, 52yrs, institutional group]

Respondents in both the institutional and experiential group talked about a culture of putting up with domestic violence, because of the love women have for their partner:

I am sure people do stay with them because they do love them or think that they love them. That's another issue if you love somebody and they don't mean to do it and they promise they won't do it again, you are not going to give them up to the police. [Marie, 32yrs, institutional group]

The narrative illustrates the complexity of love and abuse, and it is apparent this would give impetus to tolerance of abusive behaviour. This appears to be influenced by the emotion invested within the heterosexual relationship, as articulated in the narrative of the experiential group. This reflects the work of Donovan and Hester (2010) who argue that, practices of love are rooted in relationships regardless of sexuality, and emotional investment is put into the relationship even though mixed messages are received from perpetrators. This tolerance can give protection to the perpetrator, thus giving him the opportunity to continue with the abusive behaviour.

The aspect of love was not reflected upon by the notional group identifying a lack of knowledge of the impact love has in abusive relationships and why women stay. The emotional investment through feelings of love however, presents the opportunity for abuse and, as articulated in the next section, the normalising of male sexual entitlement.

5.3 Gendered Expectations: Male sexual entitlement

This section brings to the fore the knowledge, which the notional, institutional and experiential groups have of sexual abuse, which is encompassed under the term

domestic violence. The findings in this section suggest that male entitlement and sex to keep the peace, provides a backdrop to the coerced act of heterosexual intercourse. This then normalises the unwanted but tolerated sexual behaviour from male partners. The acknowledgement of duty and feelings of love by respondents in all 3 groups appears to blur the boundaries, of what is, consensual sexual intercourse, and what could be sexual abuse. The analysis in this section was informed through the legal definition of sexual assault, which recognises the act of manipulation (Rape Crisis, 2010). However, manipulation it could be argued, links acts of coercive behaviour, as it is an act, which results in a woman having sex when she does not want to have sex (Woman's Aid, 2010).

This 'duty' or 'coercive sex' (Weiss, 2009) reflects the practice of 'altruistic sex' (Bart 1986), or what Kelly (1988) names as 'pressurised sex'. The term 'altruistic sex' (Bart, 1983) as discussed in chapter two, was useful in providing a framework as a means of understanding how the emotional, and sexual needs of men were discussed and accepted by the women over their own, highlighting acts of altruism. Bart (1983) introduced a continuum that begins with a woman being consensual to a sexual act, to it eventually becoming altruistic in that the women feel sorry for their partner, or feel guilty about saying no. Respondents in all 3 groups found it hard to identify certain sexual acts as sexual abuse, and this could be understood through the idea of coerced consent (Stark 2007; Weiss, 2009) and altruistic sex (Bart 1983).

The knowledge of the notional group were speculative and the group presented little knowledge of sexual abuse. However, complexities were articulated as to when unwanted sexual attention could become abusive:

That is a really tricky one because you would do it so it didn't cause an argument but then you are willingly doing it. I don't know whether it would be because if you are made to do it then it is a different issue but its drawing the line whether you are made to do it or not made to do it. [Amy, 21yrs, notional group]

There is an apparent confusion around the issue of coerced consent (Stark, 2007; Weiss, 2009), which appears blurred through the practice of 'altruistic sex' (Bart 1983) in an attempt to keep the peace. The respondents in the notional group had no understanding of coerced sexual intercourse, and it was articulated by one respondent in that group that women did not have to put up with unwanted sexual attention now as they could just leave.

I think they did years ago because they felt trapped but not so much now because people know they are not trapped in their own environment. They have their own wages and they can quite easily walk away from it. I don't feel as if now they have to put up with that, it is not necessary. [Alice, 64yrs, notional group]

Alice presents no understanding of the complexity of domestic violence, assuming women 'can just walk away', but it is not that straightforward as the experiential group illustrate. The knowledge of the notional group were speculative and respondents presented little knowledge or understandings of the coerced behaviours that are normalised through altruistic sex (Bart 1983). Weiss (2009:825)

termed this normalised sexual behaviour as, 'normal coercion', as it is difficult to differentiate between coerced sexual behaviour and sexual assault. In comparison, the experiential group articulated love and identified sex as a normal positive attribute to their intimate relationship. However, the behaviour also went unrecognised as abusive or coercive until the relationship had ended. For example:

I didn't really think about it because, well he was always the one who was in control, always, and I thought that him trying to please me and me trying to please him was a really good way of keeping the relationship on track. Yet when I think about it, if I take the sex out of the relationship from him I didn't get a great deal else that was positive. I think for him it was a way of controlling me because he knew he could control me in bed, and yet, I was madly in love with him and that is a thing you cannot necessarily give data on, but I was passionately and madly in love with this guy. [Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

Philippa articulates acts of unwanted sexual attention, but through feelings of love and acts of self-sacrifice enabled a tolerance of the behaviour. Through her love for her husband and wanting to keep the relationship on track, he was able to control the sexual intimacy in the relationship. This distorted Philippa's understanding of what is and what is not acceptable sexual behaviour in the relationship. Philippa went on to say:

Even now there is a part of me that still has very strong feelings for him, very strong feelings for him. The sex thing is always a very positive thing and I think because I was madly in love with him it kind of almost helped to ignore some of the other things. [Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

The respondent experienced years of domestic violence, which included sexual abuse, but the unwanted sexual attention was understood as positive through her feelings of love for her husband. It is evident the emotional investment in the relationship normalised coerced, sexual violations, which Philippa experienced, and accepted as part of their relationship, as she loved her husband. Philippa went on to explain the control her husband exercised over the sexual intimacy in their relationship, which left her with no choice:

It was just a control thing particularly if I was busy cleaning or the kids may have been watching a film. I would take the opportunity to go and wash my hair or just clean the bathroom, then he would say 'ah come on come on in here for sex' and it was like that. He was never violent, not to me sexually, but when I have thought about it years afterwards I think a lot was about controlling me and controlling when we had sex. If I tried to initiate sex he would say 'no I cannot be bothered' but when he wanted it, it had to be done there and then and if I said no then I was just a prude, I was frigid all of that kind of thing. I never thought I was in a sexually abusive relationship but I can acknowledge now that I was in a very controlling relationship and I had no choices. [Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

Philippa does not name the sexual abuse she experienced as a form of domestic violence, but it is now recognised as a form of control that at the time was seen as positive for the relationship. This pattern of coerced consent or what becomes 'normal coercion' (Weiss 2009) is utilised to ensure the perpetrator gets his own way, and such control tactics also give impetus to emotional abuse (Jones and Schechter, 1992). The use of verbal coercive tactics is evident in the narrative of Philippa with her partner using such terms as frigid or a prude if she ever challenged

the unwanted sexual attention. Philippa also articulated that she had 'no choice', which links to issues of power and control through manipulative behaviour that blurred the boundaries of consent in the relationship. Another respondent in the experiential group articulated that:

It is the same thing with my second husband, it used to be every night [upset]. It became like a chore rather than a pleasure and I ended up saying something, it was a case of look it's a chore not a pleasure anymore. My libido was obviously not as high as his. [Sarah 36yrs, experiential group]

This respondent had experienced severe domestic violence in her first marriage and this enabled her to recognise the unwanted attention and attempt to stop it. It is illustrated there was the practice of 'altruistic sex', which moved to 'complaint sex', as identified by Bart (1983). However, there was an apparent acceptance mechanism to this unwanted sexual attention by relating to it as another chore, part of her daily routine, which could be identified as 'normal coercion' (Weiss 2009). While Sarah challenged the unwanted sexual attention, it was explained through the male having a higher libido and that is why he behaved the way he did, thus normalising or excusing the behaviour. A respondent in the institutional group also articulated a gendered explanation of male sexual domination:

Men think about sex practically every minute of the day but women don't think about sex as often as men do. It's a big part of their lives, where for some women it is just part of marriage, so I think that is a hormonal, evolved thing, with men. [Pauline 54yrs, institutional group]

This understanding and acceptance of male sexual behaviour is influenced through the salient discourse of masculinity and biological explanations of the male sex drive (Weiss, 2009). Gendered understandings of heterosexual manhood normalise the continuum of unwanted sexual abuse, thus silencing and hiding unwanted sexual attention inflicted upon women in the home. The cultural understanding that male sexual aggression is a natural response also reinforces 'normal coercion' within abusive relationships (Weiss, 2009). There is a belief that sex in heterosexual relationships is controlled by a man's biology and women are expected to comply, which is said to be traced through the ways in which the norms of femininity and masculinity are controlled. For example:

The general socialisation of women to place the needs of others before their own, and naturalistic models of sexuality where needs (usually male) are given the status of biological urges or drives, results in many women internalising a sense of responsibility for men's sexual pleasure (Kelly, 1988:112).

The philosophy that men's forceful sexual behaviour is biologically determined 'reinforces the idea that sexual coercion is an inherent risk for women' (Weiss, 2009:812). Such sexual practices are then normalised through the ideology of a cultural male entitlement to sex within a heterosexual relationship. What is articulated as part of marriage for women gives impetus to practices of altruism that normalises and gives acceptance to sexually coercive behaviour and this is illustrated by this research. For instance:

I have to admit I sometimes have sex just to shut him up because he twists; well, it is a big part of his life. I

just lie back and think of England and I think women do that sometimes. It keeps my husband very happy if he is having sex. I am nearly in the menopause now and he can't wait for it to really kick in when I am not going to have periods. [Pauline 54yrs, institutional group]

Pauline shows evidence of unwanted sexual attention that is initiated by coercion and tolerated through the practice of 'altruistic sex' (Bart, 1983). The act of altruism for Pauline is encouraged through coercive or pressurised behaviour (Women's Aid, 2010) by the perpetrator 'twisting' or being moody. This behaviour is unrecognised by Pauline as a form of coerced sex as it is understood and normalised within the cultural ideology that it is 'what women do sometimes'. Stark (2007, 2012) argues that coercive control is used in many ways to regulate a woman's everyday life, and sex-based privilege is only one part of that normalisation. This is evident in the narrative of Pauline (see section 5.4) through the use of financial monitoring.

Sex to keep the peace was also articulated by respondents in the institutional group:

I think some women do use sex as a means of keeping the peace, and after they may be feeling quite used inside. It is not something that they are going to publicise to people. I don't think they are going to say 'oh, I have had sex to keep the peace'. They are all very sort of unseen things that go on between a couple. [Rose, 54yrs, institutional group]

It was suggested that having sexual intercourse is what some women accept as part of their role as wife/partner to keep the peace, and this has normalised what evidently is unwanted, coerced sexual intercourse. It is apparent that there is no

recognition of coercion in having sex to prevent an argument as it is seen as being willing and not being made to have sexual intercourse. Having sex to prevent arguments suggests the practice of 'altruistic sex' (Bart, 1983) through 'normal coercion' (Weiss, 2009) by most respondents in both the institutional and experiential group. There appears a belief that women should be subservient to the sexual needs of their partner, and there was no recognition or question of pressure to have sex that coerced or manipulated their consent to fulfil the act.

Sex to keep the peace was also articulated as a common joke that gives stimulus to further sexual violations by a respondent in the institutional group:

The sex to keep the peace thing is a kind of common joke. It's like 'I did it to keep him quiet type thing' and women laugh about it. So, when persistent pressure is put on and the answer of no is not accepted the first time, that's when it becomes a problem. [Sarah 24yrs, institutional group]

What is being highlighted here by Sarah is that a highly emotive sexual violation is made sense of through jest to justify the unwanted sexual acts. Women laughing about it presents the opportunity to normalise the behaviour if it is not challenged as unacceptable by others. Sarah works in front-line service provision and has professional knowledge of sexual violations, but this coerced sexual act was not directly named as domestic violence. This unwanted sexual attention is normalised and accepted through the use of coping strategies, which in turn enables the coercion of sexual abuse to continue. Dobash and Dobash (1998) identify that a primary reaction by women to sexual violence is to exercise a coping strategy that

reinforces normalisation. This strategy has been demonstrated by respondents through the act of altruism, and explanations of gendered and cultural expectations, which internalises sexual abuse to please a partner:

It comes back to that role again, I know I am repeating myself but it is the role of the woman. I think even when I was married you do, you just think well, get it over and done with, shut them up and there will be no arguments or whatever and the day will be a bit more peaceful.
[Jessica, 30yrs, experiential group]

The right to say no to unwanted sexual attention has been lost in the ideology of marriage, or 'being in a relationship' highlighting issues of ownership and male entitlement. The issue of consent appears to be removed once there is an agreement to the heterosexual relationship, leaving the women without a choice as to whether or not sexual intercourse will take place. This internalisation of the behaviour pushes underground the subjective reality of coerced consent, consequently silencing sexual assault within heterosexual relationships. This has been articulated by respondents in both the institutional and experiential group in how they accepted and dealt with unwanted sexual violations.

What the data suggests is that the boundaries of consent are blurred by a lack of knowledge about the right to say no to unwanted sexual behaviour, which would be unacceptable in relation to a stranger, but accepted through being in a relationship. For example Christine [49yrs, institutional group] explained:

I think that is part of being in a relationship as when you say no, people think that saying no in a relationship

does not mean no. It's completely different to saying no to a stranger. It is like, how can I put it, like it is his agreement because you're his partner and that is what we do as partners.

It is in the familial environment that unacceptable sexual behaviours are not recognised or renamed as something else, protected through the sanctity of marriage or the acknowledgment of 'being in a relationship'. The issue of consent is lost through agreeing to be in a relationship and the belief that this is just what happens in heterosexual relationships. Defining a sexual violation as a form of domestic violence within an intimate relationship is complex (see MacKinnon, 2004; Weiss, 2009). Evidenced in the narrative is that episodes of coerced sexual acts have taken place with no recognition by some respondents of any abuse taking place. An acceptance of male privilege, and what is seen as a man's conjugal right to sexual intercourse, is demonstrated in the narrative:

I think a lot of men think if you are married that the wife can't say no, it's just their right to have sex whenever they want it. [Pauline 54yrs, institutional group]

A woman's right to say no to unwanted sexual attention is lost in the ideology of male entitlement and enforced through the cultural normalisation of a woman's role. Respondents, regardless of professional or personal experience of domestic violence, have articulated that they conformed to beliefs that sex in a heterosexual relationship is understood to be for men and on their terms. Thus, sexual abuse has gone unrecognised or named for some respondents in this research and normalised and accepted as part of their role as a wife/partner/girlfriend.

Christine and Pauline (both institutional group) state that saying 'no' to unwanted sexual activity is not an option. This is accepted and normalised through the agreement of consent on entering into a relationship and highlights 'ownership' in terms of it being his right. The sanctity of heterosexual relationships gives protection and a tolerance to unwanted sexual attention through the belief it is a man's right or entitlement. The ideology of misplaced consent is that by being in a relationship, a woman gives up her right to say no. This needs to be brought to the fore and challenged. This ideology normalises sexual behaviour, which otherwise would be named as abusive in the public sphere. Stanko (1985:10) suggests:

Women's experiences of male violence are filtered through an understanding of men's behaviour which is characterised as either typical or aberrant. We draw lines between those aberrant (thus harmful) and those typical types of behaviour. We label aberrant as potentially criminal but women who feel violated or intimidated by typical male behaviour have no way of specifying how or why typical male behaviour feels like aberrant male behaviour.

Unwanted sexual attention in the heterosexual relationship is acknowledged in this research as part of a woman's role, another chore that is an essential part of a culturally accepted male entitlement. This unwanted sexual attention could be labelled 'aberrant' (Stanko, 1985; Weiss, 2009) but women accept and understand it as a typical part of their role as a wife/partner. Women are unable to specify boundaries, as consent is believed not to be an option or it is already given by being in the relationship. Cultural ideology in the form of marriage has been articulated in this research as giving impetus to the acceptance of ownership by the man over the

woman, which blurs the boundaries of consent. Indeed, Weiss (2009) found that cultural and gendered understandings of the heterosexual relationship can entrap women, as interpretations of unwanted sexual contact become normalised within their intimate relationships. A respondent in front-line service provision articulated that:

I think it is this cultural thing that as a married couple, it is expected whereas actually you should have the right just to say no whether you are married or not. [Jennifer, 47yrs institutional group]

This has also been articulated by other respondents in the institutional group who acknowledge the behaviour as part of the role of married life (wee Weiss, 2009). This philosophy offers normality and acceptance to unwanted sexual attention through the belief that the right to consent is removed when married or in an intimate relationship. The emotional well-being of women comes second to their partner's needs and desires and the continuum of sexual violation continues. The ideology of male entitlement enforces the practice of altruism, which normalises and gives an acceptance to or a putting up with, unwanted sexual behaviour in heterosexual relationships.

A respondent in the notional group used the word rape in relation to non-consensual sexual intercourse within an intimate relationship, and the use of force was played down:

I don't think women would class it as rape and I think they would feel as though it is the man's right. I don't

think they would feel as though it's rape either just because he has been a bit forceful. [57yrs, notional group]

The discourse again focused on male entitlement, and the seriousness of the act was played down by the use of the words, 'a bit forceful'. This notion of acceptance of a serious violation within the intimate relationship was also articulated by a respondent in the experiential group:

I had been on a night out and I had been really drunk and I can remember falling asleep on the settee. The next morning I was like, when you know you have had sex and I was like, why do I feel like I have had sex? He said 'we had sex last night'. I said well I cannot remember it; he said 'you were asleep on the chair'. I was a bit humiliated. I went, but you can't do that though I was asleep, but I was with him you know. [Beth 28yrs, experiential group]

If this assault had been carried out by a stranger, then it would have been named in the public sphere as rape. As found by Weiss (2009) this non-consensual sexual act went unreported because of the survivor being in a relationship with the perpetrator, and this gave him protection from the law. This excused the humiliating sexual violation the respondent experienced with no challenge to the right of consent. Indeed, research has found that women in intimate relationships are less likely to define their experiences as rape and report it to the police (see Clay-Warner & Burt 2005, Weiss, 2009). Two influences maybe that sexual assaults are difficult to define within heterosexual relationships, as sexual coercion is seen as 'normal' (Weiss, 2009), and women are reluctant to report their partners as they do not want

to get them into trouble (Bennett-Herbert, Silver & Ellard, 1991, Weiss, 2009). Weiss (2009) also argues, that because no visible serious injury is suffered, unwanted sexual attention is not acknowledged as a real crime.

Renzetti et al, (2001) found that perpetrators may have sex with their partner when they are asleep or under medication or even when unconsciousness without seeking consent. This parallels the experience of the respondent in the experiential group who was under the influence of alcohol and no verbal consent was given to the sexual act. The normalisation of a man's right to sexual intercourse is again hiding the seriousness of the act of rape within intimate heterosexual relationships.

Respondents in all 3 groups, regardless of positioning, present a belief in their obligation to satisfy the sexual needs of men with consent automatically presumed. The seriousness of such practices is misplaced in the normalisation that it is what happens in a heterosexual relationship. This research suggests there is a lack of distinction between consensual sexual intercourse, and what could be a sexual violation. The distinction appears to be blurred through acts of coerced consent or what becomes 'normal coercion' (Weiss, 2009) as it is believed to be male entitlement within heterosexual relationships. It is also evident that rape within the heterosexual relationship has gone unchallenged due to understandings about what it means to be in a relationship.

Respondents in the experiential group did raise concerns regarding the concept of male entitlement. For example:

Well, it happens all the time. I think it's a massive issue because basically it is rape, it comes back to the woman being like a sex slave for her partner and, it should be there every day whenever they want it. If they feel the need then that woman should be there to give them it especially if they are married. [Jessica 30yrs experiential group]

This illustrates that male entitlement, through what is believed to be a man's conjugal rights, is now contested through the positioning of the experiential group, whereas the respondents in the notional and institutional group did not. Altruistic acts were weighed up by the 3 groups in terms of not wanting to cause an argument by refusing sexual intercourse. Coercive sexual violations have been, and are being, silenced through a cultural ideology that underpins a belief system that this is what happens when in a heterosexual intimate relationship thus, normalising the behaviour. The complexity is identified as to how it can be recognised beyond what is accepted as normal behaviour within marriage, as Donna explains:

It is not as much recognised because it is not advertised is it? I could see that it could happen [sexual assault] and people would think it is quite normal for it to happen in a marriage. [Donna 27yrs, institutional group]

Again, there appears an acknowledged normality to accepting unwanted sexual attention due to the lack of awareness of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It appears that gendered and cultural expectations of intimate

heterosexual relationships produce understandings that, once they are a couple, men own their women. The non-recognition of coerced consent gives opportunity to male sexual domination and female subservient behaviour, thus justifying and normalising sexual abuse within the privacy of the heterosexual intimate relationship (Weiss, 2009). The silence and secrecy that protects relationships from the scrutiny of the outside world, conceals and justifies coerced consent that would be unacceptable outside the private sphere.

Respondents in all 3 knowledge groups gave little explanation as to what sexual abuse in an intimate heterosexual relationship could be. However, both the institutional and experiential groups referred to unwanted sexual attention as 'just what happens in a relationship' and, as one respondent, it is not until you do not love the person anymore that it then becomes an issue:

Because when you are in a relationship you are intimate and it is something that is just normal, it happens. I think I would only recognise it as that [abuse] when I don't love that person anymore and you have to make yourself have sex with them just to keep them happy. [Beth, 27yrs, experiential group]

It would seem that coerced sex might only become a problem or identified as unacceptable once feelings of love for the partner had gone, as articulated through the experiential group. Sexual abuse is complex, which makes it difficult to recognise and name, thus preventing woman seeking help and changing their situation. The experiential group were able to contest the ideology of male

entitlement through previous experiences but this was not articulated by the notional or institutional groups.

Sexual abuse is a common aspect of domestic violence, but it is one of the hardest for women to talk about publicly (Harne and Radford, 2008). As found in this research, sexual abuse appears to be going unrecognised by what can be named as coerced consent (Stark, 2007) or 'normal coercion' (Weiss, 2009), and the practice of altruistic sex (Bart, 1983) through the belief it is a man's right when in an intimate heterosexual relationship. The identified male entitlement and the element of coerced consent however, is not confined to sexual privileges but also that of financial allocation, which ultimately can lead to financial abuse that has gone unrecognised by respondents.

5.4 The Continuum of male Entitlement: Financial Control

This section articulates the knowledge the 3 groups have of financial abuse. This brings to the fore the continuum of what is culturally acknowledged as male entitlement, and the practice of coercive behaviour within the heterosexual relationship. It is also illustrated in the narratives that financial control is underpinned with elements of emotional abuse through the 'over burden of responsibility' (Kirkwood, 1993:54). Barriers that have been identified in the narrative that prevent the challenging of the behaviour as financially abusive will be brought to the fore and discussed. The narratives in this section will be presented

through the following identified key themes: allocation of finances, male breadwinner, male entitlement and an over burden of responsibility on women.

There is very little literature that offers an understanding of financial abuse and the consequential impact it has on women and children (Wilcox, 2006). Recognising financial abuse is often problematic for women as it can develop gradually through coercive behaviour, which initially could be seen as a partner being protective or careful. A husband/partner may suggest he takes care of the bills or he will manage the family finances to remove the worry from the woman but it can then become progressively controlling and limit a woman's autonomy (Wilcox, 2006). Family finances are identified as a private issue, with financial decision making and how money is managed in a relationship being highlighted as 'sacrilegious':

I think that is probably something that you never associate with violence or abuse because money is seen to be something that is almost sacrilegious to a relationship. [sic] [Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

The management of household finances is seen as a personal matter, which is hidden in the privacy of the home. Having financial issues is very rarely brought into the public sphere and is an issue deemed to be a family problem rather than abusive. There is an apparent cultural acceptance in the management of the household economy by men in the private sphere that leaves the possibility of a struggle for women in making ends meet. As Linda explains about a friend of her sister's:

I know someone through my sister who was only given a little money to spend and if she went to the supermarket and she went over her budget she had to say take that or this off. But I wouldn't see it as domestic violence. [Linda 64yrs, notional group]

Defining financial abuse is complex and we have to be careful not to confuse allocation of the finances as a result of poverty as a form of financial control, which may be the case above. However, most respondents in all the 3 knowledge groups did not recognise or name financial abuse as an aspect of domestic violence. It was evident the dominant cultural ideology of the man as the breadwinner was articulated and accepted in the narrative of the notional group. For instance:

They are the main breadwinner, but I find it hard to believe some men would control the money, and probably to the last penny what you should spend and what you shouldn't. [Linda 64yrs, notional group]

While Linda articulated that she found it hard to believe 'men would control the money' she had just highlighted (see above) that a woman she knew was given limited amounts to spend by a male partner, suggesting she did not link this behaviour with control. In comparison, another respondent acknowledged financial allocation by men as an element of control:

They are usually the ones who do control the money. They think if they bring the most money in, they can control it. [Chelsea 19yrs, notional group]

The word 'control' is used freely with no question of financial monitoring that limits individual autonomy. Respondents in the experiential group who did name aspects of financial abuse had been through a personal experience of financial violence. However, until the behaviour had been recognised and named by others, the survivor had no recognition of it as a form of domestic violence:

She [her sister] just didn't really associate it, although she knew it was wrong. It was all that preceded the financial control and not knowing what money she had to spend, all this kind of thing. He only had access to the on-line banking and he would give her the money to go shopping, but she didn't know what they had in the bank. If she wanted anything she had to ring up and ask. [Leanne 35yrs, experiential group]

The survivor related to in the narrative had experienced years of financial control, which had gone unchallenged and unprosecuted once brought into the public domain. Harne & Radford (2008) argue that women are exposed to deliberate economic deprivation by male partners, which induces debt and poverty. I would argue it also reinforces control, severely limiting a woman's autonomy as highlighted above. Respondents in all 3 knowledge groups articulated behaviour associated with financial control that was accepted as part of the routine in their relationship, such as accounting for every penny, which has been spent. For example:

If I go to a supermarket I end up spending twice as much as he [husband] does because I end up via the clothes. Now he goes shopping so, in our house, he controls the money. He will give me £30 at the beginning of the week and then, when it comes to Wednesday, if I have spent it he will go, 'what have you done with that money?' I explain I have spent it on this or that then he will say 'how can you spend all of that?'

I have to sit and say this is what I have bought, but I would never think that is any form of domestic violence or control. [Donna 27yrs, institutional group]

This financial management is accepted by the respondent as her partner being cautious, but when does this financial control become abusive or harmful? Donna admits that she would spend twice as much, however, the money she receives from her husband for the week (£30) has to be explained to the penny. Donna is financially independent, working full-time with both herself and her husband contributing to the household income. Aspects of financial monitoring are acknowledged as part of normal family life by Donna and not thought of as abusive. Economic control can have an impact on a woman's independent financial mobility, which ultimately can become a struggle. Donna is suggesting her spending has been problematic in the past but there is the possibility of an element of control over her autonomy through financial monitoring as Donna has stated when she asks for more money, explanations are required as to why.

Respondents in the institutional and experiential groups who were financially independent accepted economic control if their partners had identified them as spend thrifts or frivolous, limiting their autonomy:

Although we have a joint account and I actually earn more than my husband now, as long as I tell him, I can spend as much as I want, but I have to tell him what I have spent. He keeps the accounts and I am a spend thrift you see and he is not. [Pauline, 54yrs, institutional group]

The narrative of Pauline demonstrates the non-recognition of financial control, with her husband controlling the purse strings even though Pauline is the higher earner. Harne and Radford (2008) argue where women have financial independence, one aspect of financial abuse is for a man to take a woman's wages or benefits. As in Pauline's situation, elements of control are normalised through acceptance that her husband keeps the family accounts because she has been labelled as a spend thrift. This may be correct, however, Pauline has said 'I can spend as much as I want but I just has to tell him what I have spent'. The narrative suggests there is an element of control by her husband knowing what Pauline has bought rather than on the amount that has been spent. During the interview Pauline reflected on the financial monitoring by her husband:

That is a form of control, isn't it? I haven't thought of it because I am a spend thrift you see and he is not but that is just part of it. I have never thought of that being that way. That is quite interesting as I have never thought about that before. [Pauline, 53yrs, institutional group]

Upon reflection at the end of the interview, Pauline began to question her relationship and link behaviours to domestic violence, especially the financial side, as well as sex to keep the peace. Pauline went on to say 'I am experiencing domestic violence aren't I?' I could not offer her any further clarification; she had to acknowledge that for herself. Unquestionably this had an impact on Pauline's subjective reality, which went through what I have named an 'ontological transition' (see section 3.4).

Gender norms make commonplace the power men have over household finances in heterosexual relationships. This cultural acceptance implements a barrier, which strengthens the non-recognition of financial abuse as it is difficult to see past the cultural normalisation of men allocating the finances in some heterosexual households. There is evidence in this study to suggest women do submit or settle with what men say in order to maintain their relationship and a happy home, highlighting altruistic behaviour as women put their husband's wishes before their own.

Coping strategies were articulated in terms of making light through jest of what is an accepted unequal allocation of finances. This, as voiced in the narrative of unwanted sexual attention, offers a normality or justification of the behaviour in the sense that this is what happens in relationships if it is unchallenged:

You hear it, men joking, 'mind you don't go out and spend that money because that's mine and I am going out at the weekend'. So you know, that was a joke form but, was it or did he mean it. [Christine 49yrs, institutional group]

This identifies male entitlement, to do as he pleases with the finances. Through using jest women are unsure how to make sense of the comment. This in turn normalises the behaviour and it goes unchallenged by women who may be left to juggle the family finances as articulated by Philippa:

There was like that total lack of responsibility. I was left to look after the finances but if I ever dared say to him why have you spent £200 in 3 hours? because he

would just draw as much money as he could out and go and drink it, then I was being horrible to him. So I couldn't win. He used to flip it all back, then it was me being horrible and me trying to control him and yet all I wanted was money for the children and to be able to go and not have my card refused at a supermarket. [43yrs, experiential group]

Financial abuse is evident in this narrative and there is also the element of an 'over burden in responsibility' (Kirkwood, 1993) upon Philippa in managing the family finances. This caused emotional stress through anxiety and a concern for her children. What was articulated by respondents in all 3 knowledge groups was this unequal allocation of finances as just being part of what happens in a heterosexual relationship. This was explained by respondents in all 3 knowledge groups regardless of their positioning, through the traditional ideology of the man being the breadwinner, which normalised the allocation of family finances. For example:

I think it is off years ago when he was the man of the house, he was in charge, so you had to put up with it because he was bringing the wages in. Not many women went out to work so it's really from there he is the boss, the man of the house. [Linda, 64yrs, notional group]

This traditional, cultural ideology normalises what is still a dominant structure in familial environments and was voiced by respondents in all 3 groups:

I think it has always been thought of as the man having the purse strings, he is the breadwinner and it's his money. He tells you what to do, you just go and pay the bills as he supplies the money. It is always the man's decision you know, this is what you do with the money.

I have had lots of issues with money with my ex as he would just take it. [Christine 49yrs, institutional group]

The cultural acceptance of the male as the breadwinner still appears to have dominance in some households. What was articulated by many of the respondents in all 3 groups was the influence of expected gendered roles that are culturally accepted within communities:

I worked in a part of Sunderland that is a traditional pit village and the expectation from the young men was that they would be the head of a household. They perceived women, even women in positions of some authority such as teachers, being definitely lesser than them. So I think it is a kind of like a cultural stereotype that the man will be or the boy or young man will be the breadwinner. [Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

Connell (1991) argues family life is a central part of the social structure and also the focus for gender inequality. This is an influencing factor that normalises gender inequality and implements a cycle of how roles should be through generations of families. The ideology of familial roles enables inequality to flourish and remain active in the privacy of the home, hiding any form of abuse. This is demonstrated in this research through the discourse regarding allocation of finances. Ultimately, this ideology is at the level of both family and society enabling men to benefit from this dominant social structure (Walby, 1992).

The allocation of finances by the male in heterosexual relationships can lead to material deprivation. What was articulated in this research by respondents in both

the experiential and institutional group's was the economic abuse and additional emotional stress women experience when left to juggle the finances in order to manage the home, both during the abusive relationship and after. For instance:

Darren was the main breadwinner but he ran up so much debt that I didn't know if I could feed the kids some weeks. In my relationship my husband came into our relationship, with massive amounts of debt and I was expected to burden that because I came into the relationship with quite a bit of money. I still carry the debt on the mortgage that I pay; he would often spend the family money and I would be the one that kind of picked the pieces up and eventually when he left, he left us with massive amounts of debt's that he has since refused to acknowledge. [Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

The discourse of 'having to manage' and 'pick up the pieces' highlights an acceptance that went unchallenged through the emotional investment put into the relationship. Financial abuse was experienced by all family members but Philippa explained that she carried the burden for the family. Wilcox (2006:174) found in a study that:

Women experienced severe levels of poverty both during and after ending the relationship, and they experienced high levels of debt and additional expense after ending relationships.

This is illustrated by Philippa above who, two years on, is still carrying the burden of the debt on her mortgage.

Behaviour associated with financial abuse has been articulated by all 3 respondent groups in this research, but it went unrecognised as domestic violence by the notional group, and by some in the institutional group. The experiential group, with hindsight, do now recognise the financial abuse that they had experienced as domestic violence. At the time of being in the abusive relationship however, the behaviour was accepted and understood as a result of the cultural ideology of the man being the breadwinner in the heterosexual relationship. The men's monitoring of the distribution of income is justified by all 3 respondent groups through this ideology, and male entitlement to control finances.

The control and distribution of income is complex and difficult to understand, thus hiding the behaviour of men who 'enforce and maintain what they see as male privilege' (Wilcox, 2006). It is evident there was an accompanied emotional distress through debt and the inability to provide food and material goods for the family as articulated by Philippa but, the behaviour remained silenced in the home. The following section is to discuss the silence and secrecy that hides domestic violence in the home and implements a barrier to help-seeking.

5.5 Privacy in the home: The opportunity to silence domestic violence

This section discusses the narrative of the 3 respondent groups that highlight the barriers that silences abusive behaviour in the home, thus preventing any potential help-seeking. It is evident from the literature that abusive practices within

heterosexual relationships have been protected through silence and secrecy hidden within the familial environment for decades. The findings will be articulated through the following identified key themes: gendered and cultural expectations, silence and secrecy and the culture of blaming and shaming.

Society is suffused with representations of heterosexual love (Fraser, 2003; Lloyd and Emery, 2000), which are strengthened through the impetus of the institution of marriage and family life. These representations then give momentum to being in a relationship as the right thing, sending out powerful messages of the happy-ever-after, which, for many, does not materialise. Women can therefore become locked into a constant pursuit of the perfect relationship. As a respondent in the experiential group articulated:

I always wanted that fairy tale. I just wanted the house, the marriage, the babies, and the happy-ever-after. I didn't want it like it was. I just kept thinking, it will get better, he will obviously start loving us more. I would want to do things with him when we came home from work. I would do teas, do house work we had a nice relationship. We had a laugh, we were friends and we went out with friends so when that [domestic violence] was happening, it was more confusion like why do you need to do this to us, why do you make me feel like this. [Beth 28yrs, experiential group]

For this respondent, the hope of a fairy tale relationship, and a happy-ever-after prevented help-seeking for the abusive behaviour she was experiencing, and offered protection to the perpetrator. It was evident Beth felt the onus was on her to make the relationship work, and she would clean and cook for her partner in the

hope it would improve the relationship. The pursuit of a happy-ever-after is culturally emphasised through TV and film (Fraser, 2003), which strengthens societal expectations of heterosexual relationships.

While the roles and attitudes of women are changing in society, the gendered patterns of domestic work and mothering in the familial environment still remains relatively static (Wilcox, 2006). Motherhood was articulated by both the notional and institutional group's as a factor for staying in a relationship so as not to disrupt the children's lives:

It would depend how bad it got I suppose and I think a lot of it depends on your age as well. If you are young and you have children, you need the house, you don't want to up-heave the children. I think you would probably sit down and suffer. [Norma, 57yrs, notional group]

What has been speculated here is again a level of severity as discussed in chapter four, in terms of how bad the abuse would get before help would be sought, if at all. In this case, it is weighed up against the impact this would have on the upheaval of the children from the family home and the change to the children's subjective reality. This member of the notional group appears to be drawing on cultural or 'public stories' (Donovan and Hester, 2010) about keeping families together no matter what in order to explain why she thinks women remain in abusive relationships, and the violence remains hidden in the home.

Women experiencing domestic violence face a number of constraints in relation to children and this includes the home and their security. Wilcox (2006) found that children are a concern for women experiencing domestic violence when looking at individual agency. This was articulated by Norma (see above) who indicated women may remain in abusive relationship rather than have to 'up-heave' and move the children. A key concern articulated by all 3 groups was the presumption that children would be taken into care if help was sought outside the family:

I think a barrier you still have to overcome is that women think social services might become involved and we might get our children taken away. I know that puts people off going through statutory services and things like the CAF [Conference Assessment Framework] that we have got now. [Rose, 54 years; institutional group]

The positioning of the institutional group has enabled them to identify this concern as a key barrier to help-seeking, which still needs to be overcome. Social Services are seen as the 'soft arm of the law' and many women are reluctant to approach the service for help (Hague and Malos, 2005). This belief strengthens the privacy and secrecy surrounding family life and the reluctance to seek help from outsiders. A respondent in the experiential group voiced her concern over seeking help as she had a bad experience of Social Services:

I have come under threat because of things between me and my partner and the threat of losing my daughter. I know another lady that has also come under the same sort of threat of having her kids took off her because of some of the incidents that have happened and you are worried about it snowballing on to the kids. [Sarah, 36yrs experiential group]

Traditionally, mothers have been the focus for the protection of children and can be held responsible when things go wrong (Hester 2010, 2011; Meyer, 2010). Because mothers are the main carers of children, and more so in abusive relationships, the onus of blame is still culturally attributed to the mother for not removing the children from the situation and protecting them (Hester, 2010, 2011; Meyer, 2010). As Harne & Radford (2008) and Hester (2010) argue a mother can still be blamed if she fails to leave or end an abusive relationship, which puts children at risk in the home. Evident in this research is the self-blame and shame the respondent's experienced through feelings of being a failure, can lead to a belief they may have done something wrong.

Both the experiential and institutional groups articulated that over a period of time survivors do blame themselves for being in an abusive relationship. This internalises the behaviour, challenging their subjective reality, as it is presumed she must be doing something wrong, adding further responsibility for the abuse to the survivor rather than the perpetrator. It is difficult for a woman to admit she is being abused by the man she lives with (Women's Aid, 2012), and loves, because of woman-blaming attitudes as well as moral disapproval. This cultural blame or fault is directed at the woman in the heterosexual relationship without giving consideration to male accountability, enforcing the cultural norm that women are responsible for the stability of intimate relationships emotionally and physically (Wilcox, 2006). This culture of blame impacts on survivors who feel they are at fault and this prevents help-seeking. For example:

I think when he said it was my fault I believed him. I believed it was my fault. I believed it was my fault he drank and I believed it was my fault he went on porn sites. I believed it was my fault he was abusive. I never ever thought it was his fault. [Philippa, 43yrs, experiential group]

Within society it can be presumed that a woman experiencing domestic violence must have done something wrong to make the man violent towards her (LaViolette and Barnett, 2000). This woman-blaming culture within society highlights patriarchal philosophies (Harne and Radford, 2008) that excuse why a man might be driven to violence (Weiss, 2009). Self-blame gives impetus to feelings of shame by the survivor as socially she is open to gossip, labelling, feelings of self-disgust and ultimately shame (Hague and Malos, 2005, Wilcox, 2006). It has been articulated by all 3 respondent groups that feelings of shame may prevent a survivor seeking help. A respondent in the notional group articulated an element of shame arising as a result of believing that the woman must be doing something wrong:

You do not want people to know what you are going through because you would feel ashamed for yourself wouldn't you? You know your family life is not right so you are doing something wrong really. [Linda 64yrs, notional group]

Respondents in all 3 groups articulated in their narratives the power of shame and humiliation in preventing help-seeking. This highlights that the onus is on the woman to take responsibility for the behaviour rather than the perpetrator, for instance:

You are ashamed it has happened to you and you are humiliated you haven't stood up before. You don't know why it has gone on so long. [Amy, 21yrs, notional group]

What is interesting here is that this member of the notional group understands the discourses of woman blaming, self-blame and shame, and how a woman might feel even though she herself has no experience of domestic violence.

The experiential and institutional groups have articulated that having to go through the experience of reliving some of the most humiliating and personal experiences prevents seeking help. In doing this, individual autonomy is lost and subjective realities change as a respondent in the experiential group illustrated:

Depending on what has happened and especially the porn, the sexual aspect of it, the drug aspect of it, it is not something you want to actually admit to. They [perpetrator] bring you down to such a level that you just have no self-respect, no confidence and you actually believe you are that person. It was easier to go along with it and it is hard to accept that you would go along with it just for ease. Such as take drugs, watch porn and doing sexually deviant things because it was easier [upset]. Normal people don't do that. You are at a point in your life where you think that must make me some type of weirdo, I must be some sort of deviant. You question everything, so going to somebody and telling them, I couldn't tell them [brothers] I just couldn't tell them. [Abhijita 44yrs, experiential group]

This respondent experienced severe sexual violence at the hands of her husband and it was silenced through the shame and humiliation Abhijita felt. Dobash and Dobash et al, (2000:193) highlight 'many women remain silent, some for years,

because of a sense of shame'. Culturally, women talking of their experiences outside the family are viewed in society as 'airing their dirty washing in public' further adding to a woman's sense of embarrassment and failure (James-Hanman, 2000).

Wilcox (2006:51) suggests:

The sense of shame that women feel extends beyond individual shame and self-blame, which I term shame-blame, to feeling ashamed of the male partner and feeling shame on behalf of the family as a whole.

The element of 'shame-blame' (Wilcox, 2006) is illustrated in the narrative of a respondent in the experiential group:

I am thoroughly ashamed, I am ashamed of him, ashamed of myself for being in a relationship with him, I am ashamed for my children and I am ashamed most of all that I did nothing about it. I am even ashamed that I feel pity for him; I am ashamed I have compassion for this guy; I am ashamed that I fell in love with him.
[Philippa 43yrs, experiential group]

The courage of this woman cannot be under-estimated given the years and depth of abuse she experienced. Philippa had not talked about her extreme experiences because of the shame and humiliation she felt, yet she chose to disclose in this research painful experiences for the first time. It is evident from the literature that survivors do, at some point, find the strength and courage to end an abusive relationship; however, coming to terms with intimate experiences of abuse is raw for a long time after the relationship has ended, which was the case for Philippa.

It is evident in the discourse around domestic violence that women feel they are held responsible in society for any abuse against them in their home. The discourse of 'being seen as a failure' or 'bringing it on themselves' intensifies the respondent's feelings of shame. As James-Hanman (2000:283) argues:

In many ways, society colludes with the abuser and further punishes the woman for experiencing domestic violence.

The barrier of shame has been raised and discussed in feminist discourses for decades (Harne and Radford, 2008; Murray, 2008) and it is still prevalent today. Ideologically we have marginalised 'shame' cultures as being located among religious cultures and ethnic minorities ignoring our own majority heritage in the UK. It is evident that the 'shame' that encompasses domestic violence is predominantly felt by survivors rather than the perpetrator for his abuse upon the survivor. Shame was articulated by all 3 groups as a barrier to seeking help but the institutional and experiential groups also articulated the impact of self-blame in allowing the violence to happen.

The positioning of the experiential group enabled them to highlight feeling at fault for the abuse, which the notional and institutional groups did not. It is evident the 3 respondent groups present different understandings and experiences of the barriers that have been articulated as preventing a pathway to help-seeking. The knowledge of the 3 groups are influenced through personal and professional positioning and

this enabled the institutional and, more so, the experiential group to present a more in-depth understanding of the barriers that prevent help-seeking.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has brought to the fore the barriers identified in the narrative of the 3 respondent groups. It is evident that the positioning of each group presented a difference in their knowledge of how the barriers prevent a pathway to help-seeking. The narrative highlights how the 3 groups commonly recognise barriers to help-seeking, but they are at times dramatically different, depending on their knowledge. Fear was highlighted by all 3 respondent groups, and was predominantly based on what happens if the woman leaves the relationship, rather than a fear of further abuse if the woman remained in the home. This element of fear related to the financial and material security of the family, and the respondents articulated putting the family before their personal well-being, thus highlighting acts of altruism.

Love was identified by the experiential and institutional groups as a barrier but it was not recognised in the narrative of the notional group. This lack of knowledge on the impact love can have in abusive relationships presents vulnerability for women in the notional group. It was also evident there was a tolerance of abusive behaviour, which was influenced through love and the emotion invested in the heterosexual relationship. This acceptance of abusive behaviour was given impetus

through gendered and cultural normalities within heterosexual relationships, which appear to blur the boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

What was also identified by all 3 groups regardless of their group positioning was the acknowledgement of male entitlement in terms of unwanted sexual attention within the heterosexual relationship. It was illustrated that having sexual intercourse is what some respondents accept as part of their role as wife/partner to keep the peace. There was no recognition of coercion in having sex to prevent an argument, as it was presented as being willing and not being made to have sexual intercourse. However, the experiential group through their positioning were now able to challenge what was understood as male entitlement. Also the experiential group identified that sexual abuse had gone unreported, and the perpetrator unchallenged, which had been influenced through gendered beliefs about being in a heterosexual relationship. Any right to say no to unwanted sexual attention had been lost through the acceptance of being in a relationship, which suggests issues of ownership of women's bodies by their partners and male entitlement.

It is evident that naming financial abuse is difficult, as it can develop gradually through coercive behaviour, which initially could be seen as a partner being protective or careful about money. Behaviour associated with financial abuse was articulated by all 3 respondent groups, but it went unrecognised as domestic violence by the notional and some in the institutional group. Although the institutional group recognised financial control as an element of domestic violence it had gone unrecognised within some members personal relationships. The

experiential group did now recognise financial abuse as domestic violence but, they did not at the time of the abusive relationship. Financial abuse was not recognised through the cultural ideology of the man being the breadwinner, and male entitlement in controlling the family finances, both of which prevents a pathway to help-seeking.

The privacy of the home was identified in this research as a barrier to help-seeking. This barrier was found to be influenced through the concept of motherhood, gendered and cultural expectations of women and the issue of shame and blame. What was found is that respondents would put children first over their own safety. There was also a feeling of cultural blame or fault acknowledged by respondents in both the experiential and institutional groups. This internalisation prevents male accountability, reinforcing that women are responsible for the stability of intimate relationships, emotionally and materially.

Two main barriers have been identified in the narratives of the 3 respondent groups in both chapter four and in this chapter, which could prevent help-seeking. One is the non-recognition of domestic violence, which will prevent the naming of any abusive behaviour. The second is the normalisation and minimisation of abusive behaviours through gendered and cultural norms. These two barriers will be discussed more in-depth in chapter seven as the complexities surrounding the breaking down of such barriers, which are grounded in heterosexual relationships, have to be overcome to enable a woman to break free from an abusive relationship.

The findings show the complexities of recognising and naming domestic violence and highlighted the barriers, which prevent a pathway to help-seeking for women. However, once the behaviour is named as domestic violence and any barriers are overcome, then a pathway to help-seeking is vital for women to change their situation. The knowledge women have of both informal and formal networks of help is to be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

Help-seeking: Understandings of both informal and formal responses

The previous chapters have articulated the complexities of recognising and naming domestic violence within the heterosexual relationship, which prevents help-seeking. The narrative in chapter four, highlighted how the groups defined and understood domestic violence, slightly and, at times, dramatically differently, depending on their knowledge. The barriers preventing help-seeking were discussed (see chapter five) and included levels of severity, love, gendered expectations, the principles of choice and consent of being in a relationship and a cultural normalisation of male entitlement within the heterosexual relationship, which blurs the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. However, once the behaviour moves from what is normalised to unacceptable then a pathway to help-seeking is vital to enable a woman to change her situation.

It is documented that some women experiencing domestic violence rarely seek support until crisis point is reached (Gondolf and Fisher, 1988; Johnson and Ferraro, 2004; Liang et al, 2005; Murray, 2008; Wilcox, 2006). One of the common questions asked of women experiencing domestic violence is why she does not just leave? (Murray, 2008). A misconception exists that it is easy for a woman to leave an abusive relationship, as previously discussed (see p.196). However, leaving or threatening to leave an abusive relationship can actually be a high risk thing to do

for a woman, which might result in an escalation in the violence from the perpetrator.

The focus of previous research around help-seeking has been on identifying and addressing the barriers impacting on survivors of domestic violence (Beaulaurier, 2007; Fugate et al, 2005; Leone et al, 2007; Liang, et al, 2005; Moe, 2007). This research seeks to broaden the knowledge base of help-seeking through the knowledge of the notional, institutional and experiential groups. To reiterate however, a survivor's experience of help-seeking was not the focus of this research; a woman's knowledge of help-seeking was regardless of experience. The narrative of the experiential group however, suggests a complexity in the stages of help-seeking, which the notional and institutional group presented no knowledge of. This knowledge was informed through their personal experiences of domestic violence.

This chapter brings to the fore the level of awareness and the knowledge women have of help-seeking in response to domestic violence. Both informal and formal routes to support were explored in the fieldwork and the discourse raises questions of both government and local authority policy and practice responses to domestic violence. The chapter will discuss the knowledge the 3 groups of respondents have of informal networks, and the responses likely to be received from family and friends, and formal help-seeking, which includes voluntary, third sector and statutory agencies responding to domestic violence in the city. This includes knowledge of what service provision is offered by both statutory and voluntary agencies and, whether respondents know how to contact the support agencies. There is also a

discussion about what is known about information that has been disseminated to raise awareness of domestic violence and, help-seeking both nationally and locally.

The findings are articulated through the notional, institutional and experiential groups and are presented through the key themes of informal networks, negative responses by informal networks that halt the progression of help-seeking, formal agency responses and the signposting of support in response to domestic violence. The next section presents the findings of the informal process of help-seeking that was the preferred route of support by all 3 groups.

6.1. Informal Networks: The first or only step to help-seeking

This research has identified that the most common pathway to help-seeking for domestic violence was informal networks, and this is the focus of this section. Informal help-seeking are the primary point of contact for all 3 respondent groups, but also the only form of help-seeking for some in this research. It is demonstrated in the literature that within an abusive relationship when women do actively seek a route of support it is primarily within the private sphere (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Fugate et al, 2007; Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2000, 2006). The knowledge on informal network responses to domestic violence is minimal in comparison to that of formal networks because research in this area has focussed on social agency responses (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Hester & Westmarland, 2005; Wilcox, 2000, 2006). Therefore, respondents in this research were asked if help was

needed in response to domestic violence, who they would approach for support in order to capture both informal and formal sources of support.

The common theme that emerged from the findings amongst the 3 groups was in line with current research, and was that informal networks were the preferred help-seeking intervention. However, there is a significant difference in the knowledge of the experiential group that highlights the stages and difficulties in the process of help-seeking when in an abusive relationship. The knowledge of the 3 groups present not only personal and professional knowledge, but family ideals and gendered discourses that can influence the process of help-seeking. The data in this section is presented through the key themes of family, friends as mediators, isolation, severity of the abuse, seeking clarification of the behaviour experienced and privacy.

The notional group found it difficult to identify help-seeking intervention in the event that they experienced domestic violence due to the little knowledge that group had of domestic violence. The group predominantly discussed help-seeking in terms of physical violence, which linked with how they had defined domestic violence in chapter four. The notional group did however, talk about family and/or close friends as their initial route to support if they experienced domestic violence. However, the data suggests reasons for this pathway to help-seeking were based on privacy and trust, as they would not want the abuse go any further:

My sister and I are really close and I know if she has been upset and she knows with me. One of my friends I

am close to and we talk to each other about things and we know it doesn't go any further. I wouldn't go to a total stranger, it would have to be somebody that I have known for a while and I was close to, you know. [Linda, 64yrs, notional group]

Previous research into survivor's help-seeking behaviour has found that privacy, and the idea that it is nobody else's business has prevented women bringing the violence they were experiencing into the public sphere (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Hague and Malos, 2005). The narrative of Linda illustrates that approaching close friends who can be trusted would be for talking, which suggests that the route may be for emotional support rather than practical. Another respondent in the notional group had similar feelings:

I would probably tell my mam, I am close to my mam, I tell her everything. [Chelsea, 19yrs, notional group]

It is illustrated within the narrative of the notional group that if help was needed in response to domestic violence the initial stage would be to disclose to someone who they feel they can trust and who they are close to. This suggests this route would be for emotional support. Moe (2007) found that if survivors spoke to family or friends about abuse it was, initially for emotional support. This gendered discourse ensures a normalisation of the 'social fact' that women talk to women about personal issues, which Wilcox (2006) argues may have influenced the neglect of research on informal support.

The institutional group also spoke about informal networks as the preferred form of help-seeking, though the preference was predominantly for female friends rather than family:

My mother would worry as she did the last time she panicked, so I think friends are slightly more neutral. They would listen with a sympathetic ear and offer sort of practical support where family you tend to have to worry about them as well. [Susan, 23yrs, institutional group]

This respondent, although having experienced severe domestic violence previously, would again utilise informal networks as a pathway to help-seeking. Susan's previous personal experience left her needing medical attention. However, Susan did explain that she now realised that at the time she had needed specialist support and if that route had been accessed it may have prevented the emotional turmoil she experienced. This suggests Susan is aware of the limitations of informal networks. Another respondent spoke of why she would speak to friends:

Probably friends, close friends first because I think you try to find out if it's really happening. Is it just me or is it really happening and you want their advice. [Christine, 49yrs, institutional group]

Christine illustrates that initially help-seeking would be to 'name it'; as there would be a need for clarification that the behaviour she was experiencing as domestic violence. This suggests that the point of disclosure, again, would be for emotional support through guidance and advice. However, I would argue that clarification could be difficult due to the complexity of domestic violence (as discussed in

chapter four), and different understandings women have of domestic violence. There is also the possibility that help-seeking may be halted due to negative responses or because they may be supportive of the perpetrator (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). There is also the possibility that a woman's social network is already aware of the abuse and, has chosen to ignore it (Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006), as disclosed by the experiential group in section 6.2.

The findings of the notional and institutional groups suggest the first stage of help-seeking is, initially, to have a listening ear for emotional support from close friends or family who can be trusted. Susan, through previous experience would prefer a listening ear and, the possibility of practical advice from a friend as it would prevent feeling a degree of responsibility for family members and their worry.

The experiential group explained that informal routes had been accessed in response to incidents of domestic violence. However, through their personal experiences, the group were able to illustrate the difficulties that the notional and institutional group had no knowledge of:

I was isolated. I was on my own so I never really said anything. There was only me and him, my partner, I didn't have any family, I didn't have any friends as I was living away from where I used to. Access to the car and stuff like that wasn't always there as that was taken away. I did eventually seek help I went to see a friend who had been through domestic violence and she told me where to go. Otherwise, I wouldn't have known where to go, what numbers to ring, who to see, you know. [Jessica, 30yrs experiential group]

When a woman is isolated and estranged from family and friends it is extremely difficult to seek help from either informal or formal networks (Wilcox, 2000), yet still those in the experiential group talk first about informal sources of help. As I have explained, (see chapters four and five) there are many components to emotional violence, and isolation forms part of the strategy in ensuring the abuser's power and control. Jessica did eventually manage to approach a friend for support because, as she said, 'she wouldn't have known where to go'. The friend then sign posted Jessica to formal provision, as the friend had used the same agency for support in the past. Existing literature identifies that friends can be excellent mediators between a survivor and social agencies in obtaining greater support (Wilcox, 2006).

It is illustrated by the findings of the experiential group that it was not until crisis point was reached that the full extent of the violence they had been experiencing was disclosed to a family member or friend. For instance:

My friend, well I didn't tell my friend the whole truth I didn't say he was beating me up she just knew I wasn't happy. I couldn't tell them I was getting beaten up and it wasn't until that night, I really feared for my life and I thought he was really going to hurt me, and I feared for my life and I needed someone to come and help us. I didn't know what to do so I rang my sister. [Beth, 28yrs, experiential group]

What is being articulated here is that the intensification or severity of the violence leads to an escalation in fear, which progressed help-seeking to the next stage. This coincides with current research (see Gondolf and Fisher, 1988; Johnson and Ferraro, 2004; Liang et al, 2005; Murray, 2008) that found survivors increased their

help-seeking, as the physical violence against them got more severe. Beth however, as part of the process of help-seeking had spoken of her abusive relationship at an earlier stage to close friends but she had not disclosed the full extent of the abuse until she feared for her life. Donovan and Hester (2010) also found in research on survivors that they had given edited accounts of the violence, playing down the severity of the abuse.

The narratives also reflect the findings of Liang et al (2005) in that, once survivors own coping strategies are exhausted, or they feel the violence will not stop without help, then the help-seeking progresses to the next stage, which for Beth was informal support. However, revealing the full extent of abuse can be embarrassing and humiliating and this makes it difficult to speak about to both family and friends (Wilcox 2006) until, as Beth articulated she 'feared for her life'. This suggests that accessing a type of support is not that straightforward and a survivor's support needs can change over time. Primarily, a listening ear may be needed and validation of whether or not what they are experiencing is domestic violence, as the notional and institutional group suggested above but, as Jessica illustrated, as the violence intensifies more specialist support may be required (Wilcox, 2000, 2006), depending on the type of violence experienced at that time (Liang et al, 2005).

While Beth and Jessica were both active in seeking help through informal networks, this was a stage in the process rather than a definitive end to the relationship, as both women returned to their partners numerous times. However, as in the case of Jessica at crisis point, her friend was a good mediator and provided that vital link to

a route to more specialist support. Wilcox (2006) argues there is a neglect of the interrelationship between the informal and formal network, which is influenced by:

[t]he separation of formal from informal response/support hiding the extent to which both aspects intersect with each other (Wilcox, 2006:723).

This suggests informal and formal networks can overlap with each other during the process of help-seeking; this was demonstrated by Jessica and Abhijita (see below, section 6.2). Both Coker et al, (2002) and Thompson et al, (2000) have found that help-seeking from both informal and formal networks can reduce the long-term effect of the violence.

Revealing the full extent of abuse that is being experienced within an intimate heterosexual relationship follows a lengthy process, and this is illustrated in the narratives of the experiential group above. Disclosure can be embarrassing and this was highlighted by the experiential group who did not initially, or ever, disclose the full extent of the violence. The narrative suggests that limited disclosure of experiences of domestic violence had an impact on the emotional and practical support the survivors received from those closest to them, slowing down the progression of the help-seeking process, until crisis point was reached.

The first point of help-seeking outside of the intimate relationship may be dependent on gendered discourse within informal networks. However, as Wilcox (2006) argues, at this point of help-seeking negative responses from family or friends to the

behaviour has the possibility of containing any violence within the privacy of the home. This coincides with the narratives of the experiential group who did not always receive positive support, which prevented the next step in the process of help-seeking, leaving them at risk of further abuse. Such negative responses from informal networks impact on the process of seeking help and are to be the focus of discussion in the next section.

6.2. Informal Networks: Negative responses to the help-seeking process

This section focuses on the narratives of members of the experiential group, and members of the institutional group who had experienced domestic violence. The accounts describe negative responses from informal networks following help-seeking after incidents of domestic violence. Those in the institutional group speak about how, the violence can be ignored or brushed under the carpet rather than being challenged, which can lengthen or prevent the process of help-seeking. It is not being suggested that informal routes are always a negative support network, as for some survivors there are positive outcomes without accessing formal networks (Moe, 2007). Nevertheless, there is a need to highlight the barriers in an attempt to raise awareness of negative responses that can stop the progression of help-seeking in response to domestic violence. The findings in this section are presented through the key themes that were identified in the narratives of the experiential and institutional group, which include ignoring the violence, turning a blind eye and rejection.

Negative responses can have a profound effect on women seeking help in response to domestic violence (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006) and this is evident in the narratives of the experiential group. The first stage in the process of external help-seeking as discussed above is disclosing the abusive behaviour to family or friends as a means of emotional support. Respondents in the experiential group articulated how family ignored the abuse when violent acts were disclosed and this stopped the progression of help-seeking through a fear of not being believed by others. For example:

It was a week later and I was still bruised, we were due to have a night out and his mam came to look after the kids. I said I cannot do it, I cannot go out with you because of what you did. I said to his mam I can't go out after what he has done to me. She went 'ah, there, never mind I am sure he didn't mean it' and that was the only person I told. I thought what is the point because no one is going to believe me if his mother doesn't believe me. [Philippa, 43yrs, experiential group]

This response by Philippa's mother-in-law was to defend her son, which prevented Philippa changing her situation and left her experiencing repeated abuse. This alliance between family members and the abusive man towards his behaviour can inhibit help-seeking by respondents, and it also fails to challenge the behaviour of the perpetrator. This unsupportive response by parents about their sons has been found in the work of Hanmer (2000) who looked at the social processes that keep women in abusive relationships. This brought to the fore that men are often not held accountable and, on the contrary are protected by their family.

Another respondent in the experiential group spoke of how violent behaviour had been ignored by her wider family, and this prevented an alternate pathway to help-seeking:

I kept it all to myself I didn't dare tell anybody as I didn't know what to do, where to go. The family were turning a blind eye to it. [Abhijita, 44yrs, experiential group]

Abhijita believed her husband's family with whom they lived with at that time, knew the violence was happening as the mother was always in the home. This again reflects the work of Hanmer (2000) (see, chapter 2). Through a lack of support from her wider family and not knowing an alternate route, the progression of help-seeking was stopped. Abhijita believed her help-seeking was prevented through Asian cultural traditions of family privacy and what Abhijita articulated as patriarchal rule (see Liang et al., 2005). However, the findings show family privacy and patriarchal rule is not solely linked to Asian culture as there can be dominant beliefs within white cultural traditions. Nevertheless, this unsupportive response again failed to challenge the behaviour of the perpetrator and Abhijita experienced repeated abuse over a long period of time. It is apparent that such responses are not uncommon within informal support networks as illustrated in the narrative of Philippa above. It was found that members of the experiential group received varied responses from family as Sarah illustrated:

The first time he ever hit me my mum was on the end of the phone and I must admit to this day I am still shocked at the response I got. She could hear me screaming and all I could hear my mum saying was 'you must deserve what you're getting'. I thought hang

on a minute how can my mum be saying that when she has been through it herself? I didn't confide in anyone after that. I had to go to the dentist because I ended up with two black eyes and chunks out of me teeth [getting upset] and I just said I got into a fight. [Sarah 36yrs, experiential group]

The severe physical violence Sarah experienced received a negative reaction from her mother strengthening the silencing and secrecy surrounding other incidents, and preventing the next stage of help-seeking. Sarah explained her own mother had experienced domestic violence, and Sarah had grown up with the violence until her father gained custody of her and her sister, once the parent's relationship had ended. Sarah's mother failed to support her through her own experiences. Yet Sarah's informal help-seeking negatively led to her being blamed for the situation she was in, thus preventing her from seeking support for future assaults. Jessica also spoke of being rejected by her family and this resulted in total isolation:

My family had rejected me because I went with that man in the first place. They knew what he was like beforehand. Of course you think you know everything, they are not going to be like that with you and they have changed. My mam doesn't see the world like most people see it and the reasons why people do these things. I blame myself for choosing him but I blame a lot onto my mother for saying, don't come back to this house if you are going out with him, don't come back here, I never want to see you again, you're a disgrace to the family. [Jessica, 30yrs, experiential group]

Jessica spoke of her family's frustration with her, in which the mother was attempting to make Jessica realise how bad her choice of partner was by giving her an ultimatum. Unfortunately, the narrative suggests this failed as Jessica chose her

partner over her mother with serious consequences. Her mother might have been trying to protect her daughter, but may not have realised that this was the worst thing to do. Indeed, existing literature identifies that mothers often become upset and angry through frustration at the daughter for not leaving the abusive partner (Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). This then presents difficulties as:

Once rifts occurred with their families it was more difficult for women to turn to them for accommodation and if they wanted to leave they had no alternative but to turn to social agencies for support (Wilcox, 2006:135).

The discourse is reflective of Jessica's situation, as she had nowhere to go. She did seek help eventually from a friend, as discussed above, but this also presented problems and eventually Jessica accessed a refuge:

I think I went back a few of times in-between you know and people gave up on me, so in the end it was sort of you are going to have to do this Jessica. They [friends] were frightened of him as he threatened to burn their house down and stuff like that, and they had children you know. [Jessica, 30yrs, experiential group]

This account demonstrates that friends and family might not always do the right thing, but sometimes it is because they are frightened themselves. There are also apparent frustrations as to why Jessica did not leave, and the friend gave up on her because she was fearful for the threats to her own children. This brings to the fore the complexity of domestic violence (see chapter four), the difficulties women face leaving a violent relationship, and the extent to which some violent men are

prepared to go in isolating women from any sources of help. However, Jessica stayed in touch with the friend and, as previously explained the friend had signposted her to a refuge for specialist support:

I first went into a woman's refuge through the help of my friend, I just packed a white handbag with hairdryer, make up and left the whole house, mortgage, bills everything. I rang the refuge and they said just to come straight round. [Jessica, 30yrs, experiential group]

Jessica did, however, return to her violent partner after she had reached specialist support, but this pathway was now open to Jessica, and she knew how to access the service again if it was needed. Members of the experiential group have highlighted that some informal networks can be negative in terms of reaching support. The rejection members of the experiential group received regarding episodes of domestic violence had a profound impact on the progression of their help-seeking. A respondent in the institutional group spoke of family members brushing episodes of domestic violence under the carpet:

I think it's maybe brushed under the carpet a little bit, certainly now as an adult and finding out information about aunties. It is sort of hushed up you know as it is not serial domestic violence but isolated incidents like 1 every 5 years. I think it's that maybe protective thing, the balance of long-term generally good relationship but then just an isolated incident. [Susan 24yrs, institutional group]

What is being illustrated here is that occasional displays of violence are hidden as the relationship is on the whole good. Isolated incidents may also be weighed up as

to their severity as previously discussed, in deciding whether or not it is serious enough to seek help (see chapter five). Such strategies enable families to contain the abuse within the privacy of the home, and victim/survivors are left with the burden of emotionally managing the relationship and the abuse, and both maternal and paternal families (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001; Kirkwood, 1993). This process transfers the responsibility onto the woman to deal with any future abuse, and again does not challenge the actions of the perpetrator. Any external pathway to help-seeking is prevented, and the process is halted until the needs of those experiencing domestic violence changes.

It is clear that the informal help-seeking may not always offer the empathetic support women need throughout the processes of help-seeking. However, positive informal support does not always end the risk of further abuse, nor address the perpetrator's behaviour. Informal support networks however, are crucial to survivors of domestic violence in the process of help-seeking, as Liang et al, (2005) points out. Informal support networks can improve a woman's emotional well-being and, as illustrated in this chapter, a good link to formal support, which suggests it is as important as the role of social support agencies (Wilcox, 2000). It is demonstrated both in this research and the existing literature that family or friends are the first stage in help-seeking outside of the intimate relationship and, for some, the last. Indeed, Wilcox (2000:35) argues:

Women garner more support over the long term from informal networks than social agencies, the majority of which offer crisis intervention. Enhancing informal

support will address women's need for longer-term support, which crisis intervention inevitably neglects.

Nevertheless, as survivors needs change, it is apparent in the narrative that the stages of help-seeking can progress to more formal support as Jessica has highlighted and this will be discussed in the following section.

6.3. Routes to formal agencies responding to domestic violence

This section discusses the knowledge participants had about both voluntary and statutory agency responses to domestic violence, in the City of Sunderland. The narrative is presented through the 3 knowledge groups and, includes a discussion of what is known about the agencies responding to domestic violence, the support provided by the agencies, and if it is known how to contact the agencies to access service provision.

As discussed in chapter two, the focus of the government under New Labour was to implement a multi-agency response to domestic violence (Hague, 1997). This approach by the government focussed on the heterosexual family (Hague and Malos, 2005) with key objectives of 'prevention, protection and support' (Home Office, 1997) for women experiencing domestic violence. As the government objectives had been raised in policy recommendations for over a decade prior to this research, the knowledge women have of services responding to domestic violence in Sunderland was explored. This was to determine if both local authority

and government initiatives aimed at raising awareness of help-seeking intervention had educated women in Sunderland.

Respondents were asked if they could tell me, what voluntary or statutory agencies responded to domestic violence in the local area, or nationally (see appendix 15). The aim was to ascertain the level of awareness women have of help-seeking, thus, engaging in a debate about government and local authority policy and practice in response to domestic violence. The notional group presented little knowledge of services responding to domestic violence in Sunderland, but they did illustrate why this might be the case:

Because I don't know any women's agencies in Sunderland probably not, but I think if you were in that predicament you would find out who you could talk to if it got any worse. But at the moment, because I haven't ever dealt with it I wouldn't know who to speak to.
[Norma, 57yrs, notional group]

What is being illustrated here is, a need-to-know approach coupled with a level of severity judgement, which would determine whether or not help would be sought. The narrative suggests when formal support in response to domestic violence is not needed at that time, there is no need to know about it. This response reflects the early stages of help-seeking that was demonstrated by the experiential group in the previous section, and chapters four and five. It will not be until domestic violence is recognised, and then depending on the severity of the violence, that a pathway to help-seeking would be sought. However, as the previous chapters have shown, it is not that straightforward and it can be a slow, lengthy process. The findings in this

chapter do illustrate a link between the severity or type of abuse (Goodman et al, 2003), and a progression in the stages or type of help-seeking behaviour. For example:

I don't think I would know where to go at first, but if it got to a point where I could not solve it, then I would have to go look, and say I want him out if it was really bad. I thought there might be just one or two houses. I did not know what there was until you have said [support sheet]. I am not aware what is going on in the city about domestic violence. You don't think about it because you have not needed it. I didn't think there would be much really. [Linda, 64yrs, notional group]

At the beginning of the interview process all respondents were handed a list of support agencies, in the event they were needed after the interview process. However, most respondents did not look at the sheet until they started to talk about formal agencies in the city, as Linda did above. However, what Linda has articulated is again, the need-to-know approach coupled with a level of severity judgement, which would then trigger a route to formal help-seeking, once the behaviour was recognised as unacceptable. The narratives also illustrate a process of self-management of abusive behaviour initially, then when coping strategies are exhausted (Liang et al, 2005), a route to formal support might be sought. Therefore, information that raises an awareness of domestic violence may be at hand, but the respondents are not 'tuned into it' (see section 6.4) as it is of no interest to them at that time.

The help-seeking literature identifies that one of the indicators prompting a woman to seek help is, the recognition that the abusive behaviour will not stop without intervention from others (Cauce et al, 2002; Liang et al, 2005). This was also demonstrated in the narrative of the experiential group, as formal support was accessed when the violence intensified. However, this was when the relationship had reached crisis point reflecting the discourse within the existing literature (Leone et al, 2005, Liang et al, 2005; Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). The notional group show vulnerability due to their lack of knowledge and understanding of the help-seeking processes that the experiential group now demonstrate as a result of their personal experiences.

Whilst the notional group did not know of any women's formal support networks responding to domestic violence, one respondent did however, name the police as a support mechanism but this would be for actual bodily harm:

No, but if he had hit them probably the police, or, I wouldn't know. [Chelsea, 19yrs, notional group]

The narrative here coincides with the group's perception of domestic violence that was predominantly understood in chapter four as physical violence. The findings illustrate that if there were acts of actual bodily harm then the police would be a source of support, possibly linking to the criminal element of the act (see section 4.2). The process of formal help-seeking by the notional group was speculated through a level of severity judgement of physical violence. Current research suggests that a source of help-seeking is identified after a violence type is

recognised, it is this process that then influences the appropriate pathway to help-seeking (Leone et al, 2007; Liang et al, 2005; Postmus et al, 2009).

The experiential group, explained that they had found their route to formal support through their informal network, as previously they had no knowledge of agencies responding to domestic violence. However, this was in response to intensified episodes of violence, and when crisis point was reached (see section 6.1). The experiential group as predicted acknowledged WWIN, which is the main service provider responding to domestic violence in the city. However, access to the voluntary service had been signposted through Jessica's informal route as explained:

I wouldn't have known how to do that [seek help] without my friend. It is not like, well, it's not public really is it? People don't know about it. It is like a friend to friend thing really because she had been through domestic violence, but she never went into the refuge.
[Jessica, 30yrs, experiential group]

Jessica had no knowledge of formal support services until her friend acted as a mediator and this is reiterated by others in the experiential group. Unfortunately, it is unknown how the friend had found her way to WWIN as it was not explored during the interview. As explained, the initial and only point of contact was the friend outside of the intimate relationship as Jessica was isolated from her family and friends as illustrated in section 6.2. However, Jessica was already known to statutory agencies through injuries she had received in previous episodes of violence. If her situation had been explored by a professional, then she could have

been signposted to help-seeking intervention at an earlier stage, preventing the repeated abuse. Government policy recommendations under the *National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan 2005*, was for local authorities to ensure front-line professionals recognise domestic violence and challenge it at the first opportunity. Research has found that domestic violence is not always identified by professionals working with women (Allen and Willis, 2008). It was found professionals could be working with women for many issues, which all point to domestic violence as the contributing factor but, it is not picked up (Allen and Willis, 2008).

Abhijita articulated that she did not reach the specialist support she needed until after the abusive relationship had ended as she did not know where to go for help:

I went to REACH⁸ counselling at the hospital because a lot of it was in my mind, what he was doing at the time I didn't realise, but it was rape. It was a case of when he was drunk there was no fighting him and the whole thing with the drugs. I think REACH came through a friend who put me in their direction as I wouldn't have known. I know now and if anyone came I could sort of point or signpost them whatever, but I didn't know at the time. I have done training with WWIN just to get a better understanding of it [domestic violence]. [Abhijita, 44yrs, experiential group]

What is illustrated in the narrative is that the non-recognition of the behaviour as sexual violence had prevented earlier specialist help. This supports the findings in section 5.3 that illustrates, the complexity of naming sexual abuse that can become

⁸ REACH offers support and advice to all survivors of sexual assault aged 16 and over. It also provides forensic medical examinations and practical support from an ISVAs (Independent Sexual Violence Advisors).

normalised and minimised within the heterosexual relationship (Weiss, 2009). The decision to seek help depends on how the problem is defined (Liang et al, 2005). However, once the decision had been made to seek help beyond the informal network, due to the intensity of the violence, it had been friends for both Jessica and Abhijita who provided the vital link to the formal networks. Abhijita explained she has now completed training with one service provider on domestic violence, and this will have built on her knowledge. The personal experiences of Jessica and Abhijita illustrates the link, or what Wilcox (2006) refers to as a 'interrelationship' between informal and formal networks, highlighting the importance of both networks.

Commonly, as discussed within the experiential group it was not until crisis point was reached due to the severity of the violence that impetus was given to the progression of the help-seeking process. This process Liang et al, (2005) argues, follows after an evaluation of their position and current circumstances. Once survivors had gone through the stage of recognising the behaviour as abusive and had exhausted their own coping strategies (Liang et al, 2005), they then progressed to the next stage of informal networks who ultimately mediated the progression to formal support. Leone et al, (2007:436) found that:

Intimate terrorists (perpetrators) often injure their victims, forcing them into crisis situations where urgent intervention is necessary, even lifesaving. Thus, victims then seek sources like the police and shelters that can meet the needs with minimal risk.

The narrative of Jessica substantiates the discourse above and specialist support was accessed when her situation reached crisis point. However, Beth has illustrated that the response she received from a formal network after a violence episode was not a positive one, thus halting the progression of further help-seeking:

I hadn't phoned the police, it had been a man who had been walking past and he heard me shouting of my mam so he phoned the police. He [partner] had scarpered somewhere and I said I don't want you [police] to come out I can deal with this myself, but they had to come because it was a case of domestic violence. I sat in the back of the car and this policeman was saying 'you don't really want to press charges do you?' I was like but yes, but the policeman was going 'no you don't because it is so much paperwork'. I think that night if he had let me and if he hadn't been saying that I could have pressed charges and been out of it [upset] long before. But the police said 'do you know how many cases of domestic violence we have a week and how much paper work goes into it do you really want me to do all that just for this for it to happen again and nothing be done about it'? He made me feel guilty, so I said no I don't want to press charges. [Beth, experiential group]

The incident that Beth has illustrated, occurred a couple of years prior to the interview, which was around late 2007. However, in 2002 the Central Police Training and Development Authority (Centrex) implemented a six part training pack on domestic violence to ensure all police officers were trained to respond effectively (Home Office, 2003). This response by the government was a reaction to criticism that the police did not take domestic violence seriously. The policy was further developed in 2003 by the '*Safety and Justice*' paper and the '*National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan*' 2005 as discussed in chapter two. The '*Domestic Violence*,

Crime and Victims Act 2004, was also implemented, to ensure further protection for survivors (chapter two). However, regardless of policy procedures in order for the interventions to be successful they have to be policed effectively.

Following the incident, Beth felt guilty and internalised the abuse. The response she received from the police prevented her changing her situation, and she returned to her abuser. The police are often the first response following a violent act and their aim should have been to ensure Beth's safety. But because of the negative response Beth received this halted any further help-seeking and she experienced further abuse. Such responses have been paralleled by other studies when survivors have received a negative reaction from support networks:

When abuse has been ignored or downplayed when victims reached out for help it felt as though they had been deserted, silenced and blamed for their victimisation. These women then internalise the hurt, blame themselves, and return to their batterers (Moe, 2007:692).

The type of response received by survivor's at the first stage of formal help-seeking is vital for a survivor's safety. Once this process was halted for Beth it put the onus back onto her until another intense episode of violence triggered the process of informal help-seeking. Beth then got the support she needed at that time from family and friends, again highlighting the importance of the informal route.

The institutional group, as anticipated, presented a broader knowledge of service provision, which was informed through their professional roles. The respondents did

articulate however, that it was only through working in a statutory service that they had gained knowledge of the support available in the city:

There is the Houghton one [refuge] and it is personal to me but, if I wasn't in this job, I wouldn't know where to go. [Pauline, 54yrs, institutional group]

As expected the institutional group named WWIN as the main responder to domestic violence in the City. Ironically, no respondent in this group identified the agency that they were employed by as a service responding to domestic violence, although all members work in a statutory or third sector service that either directly or indirectly works with women and families experiencing domestic violence. The institutional group explained that they had only gained their knowledge through their everyday professional role and through multi-agency practice, thus presenting knowledge of services that the notional and experiential groups did not have.

As discussed in chapter two, government policy in response to domestic violence put the impetus on local authorities to initiate a co-ordinated response (Home Office, 1997, 2003, 2005, 2009). In response to this, as I have explained, Sunderland implemented the Wearside Domestic Violence Forum to co-ordinate the multi-agency response to domestic violence. It is through this approach that the group appear to have gained their knowledge of other services they liaise with through their individual remits.

Surprisingly however, only 3 members in the institutional group identified the police as an agency responding to domestic violence, and 1 recommended other services offering support or a listening ear.

I know there is Relate and you can go together if your partner agreed or you can go individually. I suppose you could even go to your GP if you were depressed or, obviously you have the police. The Samaritans, as they are 24 hour if anything happened through the night.
[Jennifer, 47yrs, institutional group]

The narrative suggests that this respondent, who works in front line service provision in children's services, is not very well informed about domestic violence. Relate is identified as a response to domestic violence, however, I would argue, as do feminist scholars and Women's Aid, that couples counselling should not be used as an intervention in response to domestic violence. Relate (2011) also recommends alternate specialist support:

Relationship Counselling may not be an appropriate form of help. We help people to connect with a specialist agency through Respect.

This respondent did not acknowledge the specialist support service (WWIN) that responds to domestic violence within the city.

The literature suggests, the source of help-seeking is identified after a violence type is recognised, and this process then influences the appropriate pathway to help-seeking (Leone et al, 2007; Liang et al, 2005; Postmus et al, 2009). This knowledge would enable the institutional group to signpost women to appropriate services

depending on violence type. However, this is dependent on women being in touch with professionals and it is apparent in the narrative of the experiential group, and within the existing literature that not all respondents accessed formal intervention (Liang et al, 2005; Postmus et al , 2009; Wilcox, 2000, 2006).

A respondent in the institutional group who works as a front-line practitioner within the main social housing provider in Sunderland, emphasised the limitation of her knowledge:

Again, I don't know what is out there. Looking at that [support sheet], there looks like a lot but if someone came to me and said 'I need some help' I would probably go to WWIN. [Donna, 27yrs, institutional group]

Donna acknowledged that beyond signposting to WWIN, who her service liaises with for refuge support, she would not know what advice to give. This, in line with Wilcox (2000), suggests that social agencies predominantly offer, and are only aware of crisis intervention. Donna also referred to the support sheet that had been handed out at the onset of the interview but this did not prompt any knowledge of other services. This suggests that some agencies may have overlooked opportunities to improve their service provision for women seeking support in response to domestic violence. As in the case of Jessica, who articulated she was known to agencies however, her experiences of domestic violence were not picked up by professionals, which lengthened the process of help-seeking.

One vital objective of government policy was for professionals to be able to provide effective advice and support in response to domestic violence (Home Office, 2005). Research carried out by Allen and Willis (2008) on front-line professionals responding to domestic violence found that very few staff they had interviewed had received any formal training. Unfortunately, this was not explored in this research.

The knowledge of the institutional group on formal help-seeking have, as explained, only developed through their professional role. Illustrated in the narratives is that their roles are dealing with crisis situations through the multi-agency framework and the use of WWIN for refuge provision. There is little knowledge illustrated of signposting or dealing with support for low-level violence, other than Jennifer who emphasised other support agencies. The experiential group, as survivors, have presented a body of knowledge on help-seeking having progressed through the stages of the help-seeking process. There was no recognition, however, by the notional or experiential group of emotional or practical support to assist women in the varying stages of help-seeking. The route to formal help-seeking was in response to physical violence; this was also illustrated through the remits of the institutional group. It is demonstrated that a route to formal support is predominantly sought when the violence intensifies and women feel at physical risk. At this point in the help-seeking process, it is imperative that routes to formal support are clearly signposted making services easily accessible.

6.4. Preventative Measures: Effective signposting

The findings in this and chapters four and five highlight the many stages in the process of help-seeking. However, at the point when a survivor does eventually seek formal support, easy access to services is vital to enable them to change their situation. Early identification of women experiencing domestic violence was the key objective for New Labour during their time in power. As I have explained in chapter two, the publicity campaign set out in '*Living without Fear*', (1999) aimed to reach all in society to give general information on domestic violence and offer sign posting to support agencies (Home Office 1999). This strategy was given greater impetus in 2003 in the '*Safety & Justice*' proposals in a drive to prevent domestic violence happening (Home Office 2003). Both government strategies aimed to raise awareness through:

The role of education and consciousness-raising both amongst the statutory services and the public in general in tackling violence against women (Hester & Westmarland, 2005:17).

Local authorities as well as the government were to provide information for the public that raised awareness of domestic violence and access to support networks. This became an objective of the Wearside Domestic Violence Forum, who took up the responsibility to raise awareness of domestic violence, and signpost women to support services (City of Sunderland, 2001). In July 2008 Wearside Women In Need, supported by the City of Sunderland Council, ran a campaign '*Domestic violence, not in our City*'. This involved a campaign bus visiting areas of the city to

raise awareness of domestic violence, and of the services available in Sunderland. Therefore, this research set out to ascertain the knowledge the 3 groups had of information that had been implemented to raise awareness of help-seeking in Sunderland.

The data in this section is articulated through the differing knowledge of the 3 respondent groups. This, for the institutional group through their professional roles, is significantly different to both the notional and experiential groups. The knowledge the notional group had of signposting was minimal, but this was not surprising as the group had articulated a need-to-know basis (see section 6.2). Respondents in the experiential group presented a broader knowledge and awareness of information signposting services, especially those who had progressed through the stages to formal help-seeking. This section foregrounds the knowledge the 3 groups have of any help-seeking literature, media campaigns, education and employer training, which have been implemented to raise awareness of domestic violence and the services providing support. The data is presented through the key themes of national helpline stickers, media campaigns and literature.

To ascertain the knowledge respondents had of any information that raised awareness of domestic violence and/or signposted a route to formal agencies, respondents were asked if they had seen or read recently any leaflets, posters, or anything else that offered information about domestic violence. If they had, they were asked what the information showed. A respondent in the notional group articulated she had seen recent information in a public building:

I think on the back of a door in the Bridges it said domestic violence and a number. It just said domestic violence and gave you a number I think. It has probably been there a while but I only noticed it because of this, it caught my eye. [Chelsea, 19yrs, notional group]

The sticker the respondent had referred to highlighted the National Domestic Violence Helpline number. Chelsea did suggest however, that it may have been there previously but it had not come to her attention as it presented no interest to her at that time, it was only through participation in this research that there was an interest in the information. No other respondent in the notional group said they had seen any literature that defined domestic violence. However, a respondent in the notional group did point out that information may be there, but it is not noted until such time it is needed:

And again because you are not involved in it [domestic violence] it doesn't catch your eye. Whereas, if you are going through that type of thing it catches your eye otherwise it just passes you really. [Norma, 57yrs, notional group]

The data reiterates the narrative in section 6.3 that illustrates a need-to-know basis by the notional group. The literature signposting women to support services may be available in response to domestic violence, but it is overlooked if it is not needed. In comparison, a comment made by Leanne suggests, that campaigns such as these are only successful if a woman has experienced domestic violence either directly, or indirectly:

I actually now volunteer in a group in a primary school and there is a leaflet on the back of the toilet door. I

haven't noticed any others as I am kind of tuned into it now [laughs] but that is the only one I have consciously made a note of. [Leanne, 35yrs, experiential group]

Through previous experiences of help-seeking in response to domestic violence Leanne, talks about being 'tuned in' to seeing information about domestic violence, and abuse, and making a mental note about the information raising awareness of domestic violence. Leanne went on to explain that prior to her experiences of domestic violence, she had little knowledge of what domestic violence was, and of help-seeking intervention. This finding is substantiated by others in the experiential group (see section 6.2), who were signposted to formal support via their informal network. When Leanne had been asked if she found a route to support quite easily, or whether she needed help Leanne explained:

I didn't at all and I found it quite difficult to find information but I think I Googled it. I was vaguely aware of them [WWIN] and I think I typed it in and it came up. [Leanne, 35yrs, experiential group]

What has been illustrated in the narrative, is that Leanne presented some understanding of WWIN as she knew the name of the specialist agency that she needed the contact details for. Leanne disclosed that she had supported her sister through a domestically violent relationship, and Leanne was the informal route her sister had confided in after the violence intensified. Leanne had taken on the role of mediator, as she believed her sister would not have been able to progress with the process of formal help-seeking:

No, I honestly don't think she would have. I honestly don't think so unless she saw something in the Echo, something obvious. I just think she would not have actually thought, well I don't think she thought she was experiencing abuse and that who it was she would go to for help. [Leanne, 35yrs, experiential group]

Leanne and her sister, prior to experiences of domestic violence and help-seeking, would have been placed within the notional group. The informal route taken by the survivor was positive as Leanne (sister) found a route of formal intervention following the intensification of the violence even though it was articulated as 'difficult'. However, the formal agency identified via the internet was not accessed for support as the sister did not want to approach the agency. In line with Dune (2002) I would argue more research would be helpful to determine what kinds of help-seeking information women have found useful in sign-posting a route to support.

The experiential group articulated seeing a leaflet or poster that was shown in a doctor's surgery. For instance:

In the doctors there were leaflets, and I think a poster that I have seen more recently. There was a poster in the doctors and a magazine article, I can't remember what it said but I know it was about domestic violence. [Beth, 28yrs, experiential group]

The information articulated by the experiential group is placed within all national health services, which are accessed by the public. When Beth was asked if it displayed the national domestic violence helpline number her memory was vague. The findings illustrate however, that the experiential group are now more aware of

the information around them about domestic violence, and the signposting of help-seeking intervention, as they are 'tuned in'. In comparison, the notional group articulated that they had no recollection of seeing anything in their doctor's surgery, or hospitals when prompted. The leaflet is likely to be in their GP's waiting room, but the notional group do not see it, as they are not 'tuning in', as it is not needed.

It was predicted that the institutional group would present a broad knowledge of available literature as well as an awareness of any recent campaigns implemented in the city. All but 2 of the institutional group acknowledged the use of stickers on the back of toilet doors displaying a helpline number within their places of work:

Occasionally, there are things on the back of the door in the women's toilets at work, which I think that is quite a good idea. Also on pens, which is quite good but I don't think there have been any leaflets, notifications or posters in buildings and things like that. Well, not outside local authority buildings that I can remember.
[Susan, 23yrs, institutional group]

What the narrative is illustrating here is that information signposting help-seeking intervention is well publicised within their places of work that on the whole are public buildings. In the '*National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan*' (2005) the Home Office, as a government employer, requested all departments implement policies to raise awareness of domestic violence to its entire staff. This encouraged local authority departments to raise awareness of domestic violence by running specific campaigns within all their front-line services (Home Office, 2005). Another respondent in the

institutional group also identified that literature signposting help-seeking intervention was also prominent within her office environment:

Through training, but nothing out and about that I could say. There was for the world cup, there was a big poster campaign and to be honest that was within work again. I can't remember what it showed, it was like scars down a woman's face about kick off or something like, is it time for kick off yet? Something relating to physical violence, it was not relating to anything else. We had posters out on the toilet doors and stuff like that in the office to highlight it, but nothing, nothing else.
[Marie, 32yrs, institutional group]

Marie suggested the campaign was implemented to raise awareness of domestic violence during the world cup among statutory and third sector staff. The aim of the campaign could have been to raise awareness of the increase in incidents at that time. This may then give staff the knowledge to become more aware, not only of their personal safety, but also of that of their clients. However, at the same time a public campaign was also aired to raise awareness of the rise in domestic violence incidents but no respondent in any group articulated seeing this in the media (Home Office, 2006). No respondent in the institutional group recalled the white bus campaign in 2008 that was supported by the statutory and third sector agencies that responded to domestic violence.

There have been several awareness campaigns run locally (such as the white bus campaign) and nationally about domestic violence since 1999, which have included the use of posters, newspaper articles, radio stations as well as television adverts (Harne and Radford, 2008). However, the majority of campaigns have been

focussed in the south of the country, such as the Black Cab campaign in London (Home Office, 2003). A television advert aimed at raising awareness among young people of domestic violence was aired during prime time television, which had been remembered by a client in the experiential group:

The only thing I can remember is a television programme with this young couple in a bedroom and he is controlling her by her mobile phone. That is the only thing that has stuck in my mind out of anything. I haven't seen anything in newspapers nothing else to be honest. [Jessica, 30yrs, experiential group]

This advert was shown on television as the field work was finishing in 2010 so not all respondents would have necessarily been aware of it. It would not have been seen by many respondents whose interviews were conducted in the earlier phases of fieldwork. There had been other powerful media campaigns in 2009, such as the CUT campaign supported by Women's Aid. This was a short film by Keira Knightly however, it was censored for television because it was said, to contain too violent images (Johnstone, 2009), which no respondent said they had seen. However, another respondent in the experiential group remembered a campaign that had been given air time a few years earlier

The one I really liked and it was so bizarre because Darren was still here at the time and it was the guy in the suit. Can you remember the advert a few years ago? And it was just a load of people, it might have been on the telly all looking well-to-do like middle-class type of thing and it was saying, which one is the abuser? It was dead ironic because Darren used to go 'oh I like that' when it was him that should have been on it, because he was the guy in the suit, always looked

fab, but there has been nothing recently. [Phillipa, 43yrs, experiential group]

The narrative of Jessica and Philippa illustrates the impact of television campaigns as both had remembered what the adverts were attempting to portray. However, none of the campaigns were recognised by the notional or institutional groups. The awareness by the experiential group could have been influenced through their personal experiences and because they were 'tuned in' to the information. Both the experiential and institutional group have identified a broad range of information that signposts a pathway to help-seeking. However, it is not known if the information publicised local sources of support, or the national domestic violence helpline number, as respondents were vague as to what was actually published on the information.

The notional group however, have illustrated there is no interest in the information as it is not needed, therefore, they are not 'tuned into it'. However, the experiential group illustrated that prior to their experiences they had no knowledge of formal services until they were needed. The knowledge of the institutional group was significant to that of the experiential and notional group and specific to their work remit. However, the knowledge the institutional group have would enable them to signpost clients to the appropriate support service, although has highlighted in section 6.2 the common agency the institutional group refer to is WWIN.

6.5. Summary

Informal help-seeking was the preferred route for all 3 respondent groups, but also the only help-seeking intervention for some in this research. The narrative suggests the informal route is predominantly for emotional support and confirmation that their experiences are abusive. The experiential group have presented a broader body of knowledge about the difficulties that can arise when approaching informal networks for support. This difference in knowledge relates to isolation, family frustrations and negative responses that had been received from informal networks. This ultimately had an impact on the progression of help-seeking as demonstrated in the findings in section 6.1. The problems around informal networks are recognised within the academic literature however, it is an area that has received minimal attention, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. It is crucial we have an understanding of informal networks as they are predominantly a woman's first, or only step to help-seeking, as identified in the narrative of the experiential group.

The findings suggest that formal intervention is the next stage in the progression of help-seeking after informal networks have been exhausted, or if the violence intensifies. Access to formal agencies was often mediated through friends or family within the experiential group. The institutional and experiential group as predicted presented knowledge of WWIN, a specialist domestic violence service provider. However, the notional group presented no knowledge of formal services responding to domestic violence in the city. No respondent in any group presented any

knowledge of emotional or practical support to assist women in the varying stages of help-seeking, other than their informal networks. Outside of WWIN, the experiential group presented little knowledge of other formal support networks that could respond to domestic violence. However, one member has mentioned the police but they had been contacted via a third party, and following a negative response further help-seeking was prevented (see section 6.3).

A key finding in this chapter was illustrated in the accounts of the notional and experiential groups, and the significant difference in their awareness of help-seeking literature. The experiential group became more 'tuned in' to any information regarding domestic violence as a result of their personal experiences. However, it was not until they had experienced domestic violence, and needed to access help-seeking, that any interest was taken, suggesting a need-to-know-basis. In comparison, the notional group are not 'tuned in' as the information is not needed. How this information is disseminated and responded to indicates there may be a need for differing levels of prevention. This raises questions for government and local authority policy and practice about help-seeking, as the data illustrates a need for on-going awareness raising rather than specific campaigns in response to a specific time or incident.

However, since New Labour came to power in 1997, there has been a greater impetus to eradicate domestic violence, and they set out to bring about substantial change. Hague and Malos (2005:164) state that:

There is now considerable public and government interest in domestic violence, which has been demonstrated by the improved Home Office and police response, by wide ranging policy development and by new legislation and government policies.

The government is now taking violence against women seriously, and one of the main objectives of government policy was to prevent domestic violence happening in the first place (Home Office, 2005). While there have been several awareness campaigns run nationally and locally on domestic violence since 1999, the findings demonstrate that they have not reached and educated all women in society. The notional group presented little knowledge, and overlook the information as discussed above, so the campaigns are not grabbing and 'tuning in' their attention.

While there are some similarities between the findings of the 3 groups about the stages of help-seeking, there are also significant differences in the knowledge, which was found in the accounts of those in both the experiential and institutional groups, which needs further attention. At some point those in both the experiential and institutional groups would have belonged to the notional group. To prevent domestic violence happening in the first place, it is those hard to reach women we need to ensure has the information about: what domestic violence and abuse is in order to enable recognition, and then, information about help-seeking.

The next chapter is to bring together and discuss the findings from chapters four, five and six. The narrative in chapter four highlighted how the groups defined and understood domestic violence slightly and, at times, dramatically differently, depending on their knowledge. One common theme is that domestic violence was

defined predominantly and understood as physical violence by most respondents in all 3 groups. Barriers that prevent a pathway to help-seeking were discussed in chapter five, which blurs the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. However, once the abusive behaviour does move from what is accepted or normalised then it is evident the stages of help-seeking begin as discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Seven

Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

This final chapter presents an overview of this thesis. It identifies the claims made and raises questions about the dissemination of information that raises awareness of domestic violence, and help-seeking. The discussion starts with what the contribution to knowledge the 3 identified respondent groups provide, how they were informed through their social, personal and professional positioning and what the implications are of these findings for policy and practice. The following two sections present the key findings about the two main barriers, which prevent help-seeking and are: non-recognition, and the normalisation and minimisation of domestic violence that prevent any potential help-seeking. The analysis of the findings in this thesis foregrounds a difference in the knowledge of the 3 groups that, as illustrated are, at times significantly different, depending on their social, personal or professional positioning. Section 7.4 brings together the knowledge each group had of informal and formal networks, which illustrates the decision making involved in each stage of the help-seeking process, and the barriers that prevent the progression of help-seeking as discussed in chapter six. This raises questions of government and local authority policy and practice aimed at raising awareness of domestic violence, and help-seeking intervention.

Thereafter, there will be a discussion of the implications of this work in terms of the current coalition government, and the impact the austerity measures are having on

services responding to domestic violence. There will be a reflection on feminist standpoint that shaped this work (see chapter three), and the methods that gave me the tools to glean the rich data in this research. The discussion will also include the emergence of what I have termed an 'ontological transition' (see section 3.4). There will follow a discussion of limitations, suggested areas for further research and lastly concluding observations.

7.1. The positioning of knowledge within respondent groups

The analysis of the data brought to the fore 3 respondent group types that is an original contribution to knowledge (see section 3.11). It was found upon analysis that respondents presented different understandings of domestic violence and of help-seeking. The knowledge between respondents presented similarities, and this finding resulted in respondents being divided into groups (notional, experiential and institutional) (see appendix 2) in order to make the analysis more reflective of their knowledge of domestic violence, and of help-seeking. The analysis has illustrated how the groups define and understand domestic violence and help-seeking slightly, and at times dramatically differently, depending on their knowledge.

The 3 respondent groups as set out in chapter three (see section 3.11) are the notional group (see appendix 2), which included the 5 respondents who identified themselves as having no experience of domestic violence either professionally or personally. The notional group's knowledge was influenced through social understandings of what they had heard or read. This suggests their knowledge is

influenced through what Donovan and Hester (2010:1) relate to as the 'public story' (see chapter 4). As evidenced in the findings chapters this group presented little knowledge or understanding of what domestic violence was, or of any pathway to help-seeking. Behaviours identified upon analysis that were associated with domestic violence appeared to be understood, or tolerated through a normalisation or minimisation of the behaviour (see chapter four, five and section 7.3). One significant finding in the data of the notional group was that any information that related to domestic violence, was overlooked, as it was found respondents were not 'tuned into it', as it was not needed at that time, and this will be discussed further in this chapter (see section 7.2). This raises questions as to how awareness raising of domestic violence, and help-seeking is disseminated within society, and will be discussed further in section 7.4.

In the experiential group (see appendix 2) are the 7 respondents who identified themselves as having experiences of domestic violence either personally or within their close family. This research was about women's knowledge of domestic violence and not of personal experience, however, the knowledge of the experiential group was found to be substantially different to the other groups. The group illustrated a significant difference in knowledge of their understanding of the complexity of domestic violence. This knowledge included recognition and understanding of control, love and acts of altruism through what is male entitlement, which, had become normalised and minimised within their intimate relationships. In line with the work of Moe (2007), the analysis shows women are active help seekers but that, women can become trapped through a lack of assistance and support at

that time. Upon analysis it was found this process of help-seeking by the experiential group formed a pattern, which presents the opportunity to expand on the work of Liang et al, (2005), which is discussed in section 7.4.

The institutional group (see appendix 2) included the 8 respondents who identified themselves as working in front-line service provision that, either directly or indirectly responds to domestic violence. The respondents at the time of the fieldwork were employed within the statutory and third sectors in social housing, children's services, social work and the criminal justice system. Therefore, it was not surprising that the institutional group understood a broader definition of domestic violence, but also the services that respond to domestic violence in the city. It was found four of the respondents in the institutional group had experienced domestic violence, but another respondent did not name her experiences as domestic violence until she began to question her position at the end of the interview (see, section 5.4). The respondent had recognised and named the behaviours professionally but, within her relationship they were normalised and minimised until they were questioned by herself during the interview process.

Upon analysis it was found that the institutional group had developed their knowledge through their specific professional remit, and for some this had been expanded through personal experiences of domestic violence. The analysis shows how their current positioning influenced their knowledge about domestic violence, and of help-seeking, as prior to this they would have been positioned in the notional group. However, while this group does present a broader knowledge of domestic

violence, and of the services in the city that responds to domestic violence, there was also non-recognition by some members of behaviours associated with domestic violence (see chapter four and five).

My analysis brought to the fore the different knowledge and understanding the 3 respondent groups have about domestic violence, and how this shapes their potential for help-seeking. The experiential and institutional group are now significantly more informed through their personal and professional experiences. The analysis shows however, that at some point both groups were positioned within the notional group. I would argue this presents vulnerability for the respondents in the notional group. As chapters four and five show, that for women to seek help in response to domestic violence it first, has to be recognised, and then named as domestic violence.

The 3 respondent group types have not been identified in any other research in response to domestic violence, and it gives the opportunity to understand how domestic violence, and potential help-seeking is understood by women, regardless of their experience of domestic violence. Current theoretical and policy explanations of domestic violence, and help-seeking patterns, are on the whole based on the collective experiences of survivors (see chapter two) (Leone et al, 2005; Liang et al, 2005; Moe, 2007; Postmus et al, 2009; Wilcox, 2000, 2006). The existing research does not appear to take into account the knowledge, and experiences of other women, regardless of their experiences of domestic violence, and how this shapes their potential for help-seeking. This is particularly important given the significance

of informal support networks, and it being predominantly women who survivors rely on in the early stages of help-seeking. I shall return to this discussion in section 7.4. The non-recognition of abusive behaviours are the focus of discussion in the next section.

7.2. Non-Recognition: What is domestic violence?

The analysis highlights that defining domestic violence and the myriad of behaviours associated with it is in itself complex. In line with Harne and Radford (2008) the analysis shows that recognising and naming behaviours associated with domestic violence is intricate, it is an on-going process that involves a series of stages. However, the first stage in the process of help-seeking is recognising that what is being experienced is domestic violence. The analysis in this research presents the opportunity to expand on the current knowledge base of the barriers that prevent the recognition of domestic violence. The analysis has found that the non-recognition of domestic violence is influenced by; the 'public story' (Donovan and Hester, 2010), the complexity of the term 'violence', the level of severity, the impact of gendered roles, which normalise coercive control and principles of choice and consent when in a relationship and thus, prevent the naming of unacceptable behaviour as domestic violence within the heterosexual relationship.

The notional group as illustrated in chapter four found it difficult to define domestic violence, and predominantly the group understood it to be actual bodily harm, such

as a black eye that can attach a label (see section 4.1). This understanding echoes what Donovan and Hester argue is the 'public story' (2010:1) and this perspective shaped their potential for help-seeking. For example, it was found upon analysis that the perspectives of the notional group about domestic violence were influenced via the media, by what they had seen on television, or read in magazines suggesting that on the whole physical abuse is portrayed as domestic violence. It is argued that dominant understandings of domestic violence such as, physical violence present the opportunity to silence other forms of domestic violence (Wilcox, 2006). The analysis shows that there was non-recognition of sexual violence by all 3 respondent groups (see chapter four and five).

The notional group questioned the use of broad terms such as, violence or threatening behaviour in the definition. There was a question of what constituted 'violence' (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Mason, 2002; Mooney, 2000), and what behaviour was encompassed under the term. As discussed in chapter two the use of the word 'violence' is contested due to the broadness of the word, its intricacy, and how the context in which it is positioned may affect its recognition (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Donovan and Hester, 2010; Hague and Malos, 2005; Wilcox, 2006).

There was very little knowledge of any other forms of domestic violence by the notional group (chapter four and five), or of any agencies responding to domestic violence. However, the analysis illustrates that the limited knowledge the group may have is influenced by the lack of interest in any information about domestic violence, as respondents were not 'tuned into it' as it was not needed at that time. It was

illustrated that it would not be until help was needed that there would be an interest in the information, and this was substantiated by the experiential group. The government and local authority impetus on 'stopping it happening in the first place' (Home Office, 2003:18), which was aimed at raising awareness of domestic violence is not capturing, and 'tuning in' the attention of all women in society.

In comparison the experiential group understood domestic violence more broadly. The group recognised a definition that went beyond physical violence, highlighting the dynamics of control, and upon reflection now challenged male entitlement. However, upon analysis it was found that prior to the group's personal experiences they understood domestic violence to be predominantly, physical abuse, identifying with the notional group. However, in line with the current literature experiences of domestic violence was not recognised until the abuse had intensified, and crisis point had been reached (see chapter six). It was through the intensification of physical violence that prompted help-seeking as the experiential group did not at that time define, or recognise the more complex elements of domestic violence.

It was found that defining coercive control is complex (see Stark, 2007, 2012), and for the experiential group it was only named after they had left the relationship (chapter five), as illustrated in the narrative of Abhijita who referred to the elements of coercive control as 'symptoms' (p:168). This is in line with the work of Humphreys and Thiara (2003) who found that more complex aspects of domestic violence were labelled as 'symptoms' by survivors. It was not until the 'symptoms' had intensified over time, and they had been brought into the public sphere that the power they had

as a collective was recognised (Humphreys and Thiara, 2003). This was illustrated by Abhijita as it was only when the 'symptoms' as a collective became more intense, or severe that prompted a pathway to help-seeking.

Echoing the work of Stark (2007) the analysis of the experiential group demonstrates that the element of control is used by perpetrators to 'micromanage' and 'entrap' a woman in an abusive relationship. For example, the experiential group highlights how control works manipulatively to distort a woman's subjective reality (Kirkwood, 1993) until it is believed you are that person, as Abhijita and Phillipa illustrated (section, 4.4). Coercive control is now recognised as a major form of emotional abuse, and as pointed out in chapter two, very recently it was added to the government definition of domestic violence (see section 7.5). However, as the analysis shows coercive control is complex, and the institutional group reflected the difficulty in recognising associated behaviours.

As set out in chapter four, members of the institutional group did have a broad understanding of what domestic violence is in comparison to that of the notional and experiential groups. However, again individual knowledge had been based on physical violence until their understandings of domestic violence was shaped through their professional roles. This suggests that prior to their professional remit they may have sat within the notional group. Their knowledge of domestic violence was however, limited to their professional remit, and encounters within their day to day work. One member of the institutional group however, prior to the interview, had collected leaflets and read up on domestic violence (see p:160). This suggests her

participation had sparked her interest and this prompted a need to 'tune in' to the information. Upon analysis however, the institutional group did not recognise fully the more complex behaviour associated with sexual, financial, or emotional violence, which could prevent help-seeking for both themselves, and any potential clients.

More complex behaviours such as, 'normal coercion' (Weiss, 2009), 'altruistic sex' (Bart, 1986), or financial control were articulated as being normalised and minimised (section 7.3) within relationships. The analysis found that for some members in the institutional group their understanding had been influenced by personal experiences, which were either named as domestic violence, or recognised as abusive but, not categorised as domestic violence within their intimate relationships. The institutional group highlighted the difficulty however, of defining, and naming behaviours other than physical violence, and this was echoed by the experiential group. As the literature shows, physical violence attaches a label. For example, injuries that can be seen or felt physically can prompt a source of support that is responsive to the violence that has been experienced (Liang et al, 2005). For instance, treatment for injuries at a hospital may be accessed as Sarah explained, or a safe haven may be sought in a refuge as in the case of Jessica (see chapter six), if women feel their life is at risk. This suggests that women are active help seekers throughout their abusive relationships, whether it is to salvage the relationship, or prevent further abuse (Moe, 2007).

The analysis shows however, that when physical violence was acknowledged as unacceptable it was not necessarily recognised and named immediately, preventing direct help-seeking. For example, it was found that all 3 respondent groups referred to a scale of severity, which gave acceptance to low-level, and at times more severe violence (see chapter four). The scale of severity identified in this research is in line with what Fugate et al, (2005:302) coined as a 'threshold' whereby survivors weigh up the seriousness of physical acts to decide whether or not help should be sought. The point at what the behaviour becomes unacceptable is complex, and the level of severity was different between the 3 groups, as it was between individuals within each group. For example, the notional group referred to a 'slap on the face' not being serious enough to seek help, in comparison to the institutional group who suggested it might take the 'worst hiding of your life'. However, the analysis of the experiential group illustrated it is not that straightforward, and it was at crisis point, when respondents feared for their life that help was sought. The experiential group and members of the institutional group made no initial recognition, or link to being in a physically abusive relationship, until a serious incident(s) had occurred, or the violence had intensified (see chapter four).

The analysis illustrates the ambiguity that exists about what domestic violence is, and the difficulty in naming physically abusive behaviour until it reaches a high level of severity, then help-seeking begins in response to the intensification. This suggests vulnerability more so of the notional group in terms of potential help-seeking, as it is illustrated it is a long complex process of decisions in recognising, and naming the behaviour as domestic violence. The analysis highlights that the

first stage in the process of help-seeking is complex, and has the potential to be a lengthy process because of the non-recognition of abusive behaviour as domestic violence.

Significantly, in this research no respondent in the notional or experiential group defined sexual abuse as a form of domestic violence. However, the experiential group do illustrate experiences of sexual abuse in chapter five that went unreported, or challenged, preventing potential help-seeking. Domestic violence has to be defined, understood and named for help to be sought enabling it to challenge what can become normalised, minimised and tolerated within heterosexual relationships (section 7.3). Publically however, assaults by men against women in the public arena were acknowledged as a crime, but through principles of 'choice and consent', and 'being in a relationship' the recognition and challenging of abusive behaviour in a relationship were not acknowledged as such.

The analysis has found that an assault within an intimate heterosexual relationship is at times tolerated with no link made to the behaviour as domestic violence, or the criminal element of the assault. In comparison, stranger attacks are predominantly a one-off assault, which happens in a public space (Harne and Radford, 2008; Stark, 2012), and are instantly recognised a crime. A distinct difference identified upon analysis is that an assault by a partner/husband within the heterosexual relationship is tolerated and unrecognised through the belief that by choosing to be in that relationship, consent is presumed to be given to any behaviour that then occurs. It is

apparent that the depth of emotional investment in a relationship can prevent abusive behaviour being named and challenged.

It was found that abusive behaviour was not recognised as criminal, or unacceptable by some members in all 3 groups because, as a couple, they are 'choosing to be together' (see chapter four). The abusive relationship appears to be protected through the emotional investment by women (Jones and Schechter, 1992), which blurs the boundary of consent. In comparison, stranger assaults do not have the emotional attachment that questions or presents a tolerance as to why the assault happened, and consent is clear. The analysis highlights that violence in the home has the possibility of going unrecognised through an acceptance of 'being in a relationship' and the principles of 'choice and consent' (see chapter four). These issues however, may not only reflect the respondents perceptions, but through the 'public story' (Donovan and Hester, 2010) may reflect the perceptions of society more generally.

The institutional group as a result of professional encounters, recognised the difficulties survivors have in naming abusive behaviour beyond being a relationship problem. Analysis showed that there was a belief by the experiential group that as they chose to be in a relationship the right to consent was removed giving a sense of ownership of the woman by the man (see chapters four and five). It was found the notional group did not recognise any aspect of domestic violence as a crime, which was also influenced through the ideology of 'being in a relationship'. It was not seen as a problem because as a couple you are choosing to live together therefore it

becomes part of that relationship. The analysis again suggests the principles of choice and consent are blurring the boundaries of unacceptable and acceptable behaviour within an abusive relationship.

Physical violence is acknowledged as a criminal act in society but this research has found that it takes on a whole different dimension once rooted within the heterosexual relationship (see section 4.2). The analysis shows that when a person enters into an intimate relationship the distinction between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour becomes dramatically more complex. While much work has been done by the government and agencies to raise the profile of domestic violence as a crime (Home Office, 1997; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2009), it is not recognised by all women in society.

The Home Office definition that was in operation during the fieldwork for this research focused on 'incident based understandings of domestic violence' (Donovan and Hester, 2010:2), which reflects the framework of the criminal justice system. In line with Wilcox (2006) the analysis has shown this makes it difficult for other behaviours such as emotional abuse that can have 'long-term damaging effects' (Kirkwood, 1993; Stark, 2007; Wilcox, 2006) to be taken seriously. This questions how information is disseminated at both national and local levels to capture and 'tune in' the attention of all women in society to the intricacy of domestic violence.

The evidence has shown that the non-recognition of behaviours that are abusive makes women vulnerable. This has been brought to the fore through the notional group who present the greater vulnerability of the 3 groups due to their lack of knowledge, and interest about what constitutes domestic violence, and routes-to-help-seeking. The non-recognition of abusive behaviour prevents what is the first stage in the process of help-seeking: 'naming it'. This raises questions as to: how domestic violence is defined, how the information is understood by women in society, and how we challenge the barriers, which prevent the naming of the behaviours as abusive. My analysis of the data has illustrated that the 3 respondent groups each present at times, similar, but on the whole, significantly different understandings of domestic violence, which is influenced through their social, personal and professional experiences.

I will come back to this in the concluding discussion as it raises questions for government and local authority policy and practice, and how they raise awareness of domestic violence. It is apparent one size does not fit all, and all women need to be 'tuned in' to information that is disseminated to raise awareness of domestic violence, and of help-seeking intervention. The next section brings to the fore the two barriers that were identified in chapters four and five, which are the normalisation and minimisation of abusive behaviour that is associated with sexual, emotional and financial abuse.

7.3. Normalisation and Minimisation

Upon analysis, it was found that emotional, sexual and financial abuse is unrecognised as domestic violence because it is understood to be what happens within the intimate heterosexual relationship. For example, the analysis has shown that 'pressure tactics' (Kelly, 1988) that encompass coercive control (Stark, 2007), such as, sulking, labelling tactics, and being checked up on were minimised and normalised within relationships. It was found the behaviour was tolerated through what is illustrated as gendered roles and expectations. My analysis suggests that such normalisation gives impetus to the minimisation of the severity of the unacceptable, or unwanted behaviour, echoing the work of Goodman et al, (2003).

It was found that elements of coercive control, which can be understood through the 'micromanagement' (Stark, 2007:274) of women, were tolerated, through what was found to be part of the gendered roles within the abusive heterosexual relationship. The analysis has found, in line with Weiss (2009), that what becomes 'normal coercion', can influence acts of altruism, through feelings of love, emotional investment, and male entitlement, which can and have silenced abusive behaviours. The ideology of the male breadwinner and privacy in the home all contribute in normalising and minimising the abusive behaviour within the intimate relationship.

The analysis does at times reflect existing evidence of normalisations and minimisations of behaviour within abusive relationships but, it also contributes to

and expands the knowledge base through the different understandings of the 3 respondent groups. In line with Kirkwood (1993), Stark (2007) and Wilcox (2006), the analysis has found that low-level behaviours associated with emotional abuse can become grounded in some heterosexual relationships. This analysis presents the opportunity to extend that work through the knowledge, and understandings of the 3 respondent groups, which present at times, similar, and at other times significantly different knowledge. The discussion is presented through: what is believed to be a relationship problem, male entitlement, gendered roles and expectations, and cultural normalisation (see chapters four and five), which ultimately normalise and minimise abusive behaviour.

The notional group, as illustrated in chapter four presented no understanding of coercive control as a form of domestic violence. For example, in terms of 'being told what to wear' they spoke of it as controlling (see chapter four), but it was not recognised as a form of domestic violence. It was acknowledged as what happens in a relationship thus, normalising the behaviour. This low-level manipulative, and controlling behaviour associated with how a man wants 'his' woman to look presents the opportunity for a man to objectify the wife/partner. Stark (2007), as discussed, argues this behaviour by abusive men is for the purpose of 'micromanaging' women, and eventually as such get their own way as the behaviour becomes normalised.

The notional group also referred to what can be linked with acts of altruism, in that by wearing what a male partner wants her to, makes their partners feel secure

regardless of their own feelings. This suggests that by conforming to their partner's wishes it gives a reassurance of faithfulness within the relationship (see chapter four), minimising the element of control. I would argue this normalisation presents the opportunity for abusive men to 'distort a woman's subjective reality' (Kirkwood, 1993:56) by slowly limiting autonomy, and eventually a woman comes to believe that is how they should look, and who they are, which was substantiated by the members of the experiential group.

As evidenced in chapter five, upon reflection the experiential group do now recognise the low-level manipulation, which had presented at the onset of their relationship and, which had become normalised and minimised. For example Abhijita and Phillipa only recognised the low-level abuse, and manipulation that had started at the onset of their relationship, after the abusive relationship had ended (see section 5.3). The element of coercive control, which had normalised and minimised the abusive behaviour, appeared to be strengthened through the emotional investment that went into their relationships. It was presumed that the male taking an interest was a good thing, or women went along with it to keep the peace.

In line with the work of Wilcox (2006), in the early stages of an intimate heterosexual relationship it is difficult to name men's actions as abusive, as it is perceived as what is expected in an intimate relationship. This is illustrated in the narrative of the notional group, as discussed above and in chapter five, highlighting vulnerability, as this behaviour can begin early in the relationship and is aimed at trapping a woman

within the abusive relationship (Stark, 2007; Wilcox, 2006). However, as this behaviour becomes minimised and normalised, and tolerated as part of everyday life it becomes harder to name as domestic violence, as the experiential group have illustrated (see chapter five). The analysis suggests this ideology is embedded in culturally accepted gendered roles where for example, a man taking an interest is presumed a good thing, which results in a woman wanting to please him (see chapter five). This can be perceived to be the 'strength of a man's love for them' (Wilcox, 2006:46), and this belief prevents the recognition of what can become abusive behaviour.

As I have explained, the knowledge of the institutional group was through their professional positioning. Through this the group were able to speak of a manipulation, which constructs an emotional base of power justifying the behaviour through women's desire to conform, and please their husband/partner. The group also pointed out the complexity of recognising, when what is articulated as a 'man taking an interest' becomes a form of control, and ultimately naming the behaviour as domestic violence. This was, as discussed, substantiated by the experiential group who could now, upon reflection recognise the elements of coercive control.

Members in all 3 respondent groups explained that a woman may want to please a man if he was taking an interest in her. There was no recognition of 'objectification' (Kirkwood, 1993), or what Stark (2007:274) calls the 'micromanagement' of women, and such tactics can lead to material constraints on women (Jones and Schechter, 1992). The analysis suggests this management of women by abusive men becomes

embedded in the abusive heterosexual relationship, and selfless acts of altruism by women can then give impetus to a continuum of the abusive behaviour. This in turn normalises and minimises the behaviour as it becomes part of routine of day to day life, as women try to keep their relationships on track (Kelly, 1988; Kirkwood, 1993; Wilcox, 2006).

The analysis shows, that verbal coercion by husbands/partners was utilised for their own sexual gratification. It was found that the verbal coercion went unrecognised as abusive by the experiential and institutional groups. For example, unwanted sexual intercourse was tolerated through a need to prevent husbands/partners going in a mood, which ultimately minimises the seriousness of the unwanted sexual attention, echoing the work of Wilcox (2006). This prevented the unwanted sexual attention being recognised, and named as abusive, and ultimately prevented help-seeking (see chapter five). As the analysis of emotional abuse continued it was found that love influences the acceptance of not only low-level, but in some cases extreme domestic violence.

The literature in chapter two highlights that love, until very recently, had been given minimal attention within research about domestic violence (Fraser, 2003; Lloyd, 2000; Donovan and Hester, 2010). The findings in this thesis present the opportunity to expand that knowledge base through the understandings of love within the heterosexual relationship through the 3 respondent groups. In line with Donovan and Hester (2010) amongst others, the element of love is an area that

needs to be taken seriously within the discourse of domestic violence. Indeed, Donovan and Hester (2010) argue:

That an essential aspect of domestic violence that occurs in the context of relationships, ostensibly entered into on the basis of consent and notions of love/emotion, has been ignored (2010:4).

Chapters two and five foreground that defining love is complex (Fraser, 2003). The understanding of love in this thesis, as highlighted in chapter five, was on being in love romantically and the performing of acts that are termed passionate, which enforce the depth of emotion in the heterosexual relationship. It was found during analysis that the aspect of love and cultural and gendered expectations in intimate relationships had prevented the challenging of abusive behaviour (see section 5.2). The analysis in this thesis suggests, that love can through emotional reactions impair reasoned thinking. This presents the opportunity to normalise and minimise abusive behaviour, resulting in the behaviour remaining very much hidden in the home (see section 5.2).

The notional group did not recognise love as a barrier to naming abusive behaviour as domestic violence, or to the impact it can have on preventing a pathway to help-seeking. However, the evidence shows it was through the personal and professional experiences of the experiential and institutional groups, which had enabled the barrier to be brought to the fore during analysis. What was evidenced upon analysis of the experiential group was that love was only recognised, and named as a barrier once the abusive behaviour had been brought into the public sphere (see section

5.2), and the respondents were outside of the relationship. This again presents potential for vulnerability for members of the notional group.

Wilcox (2006:56) argues that women can become immersed in the heterosexual relationship, and this presents feelings of 'wanting to do the right thing', and inevitably, the responsibility rests on the woman to emotionally manage the relationship. It was found, upon analysis, that there was a belief, by all 3 respondent groups, that 'women want to please a man' (see chapters four and five) echoing the work of Wilcox (2006). This illustrates a depth of emotional investment within the relationship by women, which can give impetus to acts of altruism by women, who put the needs, and happiness of the man before their own. This highlights the gendered dynamics of the emotional management of the abusive heterosexual relationship.

The impact of love, as discussed in chapter five, silenced abusive behaviour within the relationships of the experiential group, in the hope the abuse would stop, and the relationship would resume as it had in the beginning. As De Beauvoir (1997) found, love can be dangerous for women, as it strengthens the emotional responsibility in the relationship, and this can be intentionally manipulated by male partners. This was also found in the work of Donovan and Hester (2010:4) who argued that:

Domestically violent relationships share similar practices of love, including strategic declarations of love by the perpetrator, especially at crisis moments when survivors threaten to leave.

In line with both De Beauvoir (1997) and Donovan and Hester, (2010) it was found that when members of the experiential group threatened to leave, or they challenged the behaviour it became their fault, or it was because he loved them (chapter five). As Fraser (2003) argues, western popular culture exposes both women and men to many discourses of love, which is an ongoing production (see chapter two). It is then, how these fictional examples are understood and lived out in reality that presents dilemmas for women in abusive relationships. However, what is complex is, how women differentiate between what is healthy and unhealthy love.

The analysis identified that initially the emotional investment by the experiential group in their relationships can through practices of love normalise the behaviour, thus preventing it being challenged. I would argue, as does Donovan and Hester (2010) that the definition of emotional abuse needs to include the practises of love, as it can silence abusive behaviour, which ultimately prevents a pathway to help-seeking. What the analysis highlighted was that the ideology of being in love can normalise, and minimise abusive behaviour, but also entrap a woman (Stark, 2007) within an abusive relationship, as identified by the experiential group (see section 5.2).

The institutional group identified a belief that women, out of feelings of love for their abusive partner, and if it is promised the abuse will not happen again, can be minimised and become part of the routine of the abusive relationship. The group acknowledged that love forms a bond between the couple, which prevents the challenging, and naming of the behaviour as abusive, and it gave protection to

perpetrators from criminal conviction, as illustrated by the experiential group (see section 5.2). The analysis has found that 'love' was used in the narrative of the experiential group to explain feelings of emotion that was felt for their partner, and this enabled the minimisation of the severity of abusive behaviour, and offered protection to partners from prosecution (see section 5.2 and 5.3).

Understandings through what can be linked to the 'public story' (Donovan and Hester (2011:4) and cultural normalisation was evident in the narrative of the experiential group. For example, Beth just wanted the 'marriage and the fairy tale relationship' (see section 5.5), which resulted in a happy ever after (Fraser, 2003; Lloyd and Emery, 2000). The emotional investment in the relationship minimised and consequently silenced the abusive behaviour. The analysis of the experiential and institutional groups brought to the fore a normalisation and minimisation of abusive behaviour, which was not understood by the notional group. The non-recognition of the abuse was given impetus through; gendered norms and expectations, love and the emotional investment by women in the relationship (see chapter five).

The analysis shows, that love can prevent women breaking free from abusive relationship, and reframes understandings of 'why women don't leave' abusive heterosexual relationships. The analysis identifies that love is neither recognised, nor named as a barrier until a woman is outside of the relationship (see section 5.2). In line with Wilcox (2006) amongst others, the analysis shows that emotional abuse is difficult to define, as it is multi-dimensional, adding to the complexity of

recognising, and naming abusive behaviours. This complexity was problematic in relation to sexual violence.

Elements of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988; MacKinnon, 2004; Weiss, 2009, 2011), also went unrecognised as domestic violence by all 3 respondent groups. This appeared to be influenced through a normalisation and minimisation of unwanted sexual attention. The notional group again, presented little knowledge of sexual abuse as a form of domestic violence within heterosexual relationships. This suggests that the group may not recognise or understand what constitutes sexual abuse within the intimate heterosexual relationship. The analysis shows that aspects of ownership, male entitlement, biology and sex to keep the peace provide a backdrop to the coerced act of heterosexual intercourse and rape. This then minimises and normalises unwanted, but tolerated coerced sexual violations from male partners (see section 5.3), and this is evidenced in the narratives of both the experiential and institutional groups.

The analysis of sexual violence confirms, and contributes to the current knowledge base by expanding on the work of Bart (1986), Kelly (1993), Weiss, (2009, 2011) and Stark (2007), which was discussed in chapter two. The findings expand the theoretical understandings of normalisation and minimisation, which prevent sexual violence being recognised, and named. This ultimately raises questions as to how sexual violence is defined, and how the information that raises awareness about sexual violence is disseminated by Government, and LA's. Rape and sexual assault within intimate relationships is now clearly recognised within the law (Rape Crisis,

2010) however, as the analysis shows, it is not recognised by members in all 3 groups. For example, in line with Weiss (2009) it was found that when rape had occurred in the intimate relationship it went unrecognised, and the perpetrator went unchallenged (see section 5.3).

It was found that a member of the experiential group, after she had consumed alcohol, had experienced a sexual assault by her partner, which had gone unrecognised as domestic violence, or more seriously as a sexual offence (see section 5.3). This also reflects the work of Renzetti et al, (2001) and Galvani, (2001), who found that men may have sex with their partner when they are asleep, or under the influence of medication without seeking consent (see chapter two). However, rape in marriage, or within an intimate relationship has been illegal since 1991, but there is an apparent difference between what is a crime, and the experiential and institutional groups understandings and perceptions.

Coercive sexual intercourse has the possibility to be aberrant (Weiss, 2009) but it is recognised as typical male behaviour (Weiss, 2009, 2011) as discussed in chapter five. MacKinnon (2004:172) as discussed, argues it is difficult to 'recognise sexual abuse when it just looks like sex' as through the normalisation of the behaviour it becomes typical within the abusive relationship. This presents a continuum of the behaviour, and it is unlikely to be challenged as recognition is dependent on a woman's perspectives. Thus, as the behaviour is minimised and normalised as an everyday experience for women it highlights the intricacy of recognising the behaviour beyond just sex (MacKinnon, 2004).

It was found upon analysis that for members of the experiential group and a member in the institutional group their own feelings, and emotions were disregarded as to whether or not they wanted sex, as it was believed male entitlement. For example, the analysis shows that unwanted sexual attention was understood and accepted through the salient discourse of masculinity, and biological explanations of the male sex drive (Weiss, 2009) (see section 5.3). Gendered understandings of heterosexual manhood normalise the continuum of unwanted sexual abuse (Kelly, 1988), thus normalising unwanted sexual attention inflicted upon women in the home.

Unwanted sexual intimacy through feelings of love, and acts of altruism enabled the normalisation of the behaviour through a belief in conjugal rights (see section 5.3) (Stark, 2007; Weiss, 2009). This 'distorts the subjective reality' (Kirkwood, 1993) of what is acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour in the abusive relationship. For example, Abhijita explained that through the coerced practice of what she called 'deviant' sexual behaviour she came to believe she was that person, a deviant who was perverse (see section 5.3). The experiential group however, were now able to contest the ideology of male sexual entitlement through their positioning, but this was not recognised by the notional or institutional groups.

What can be linked to acts of 'altruistic sex' (Bart, 1986) influenced through 'normal coercion' (Weiss, 2009) have been evidenced during the analysis of the experiential group, and for a member of the institutional group but it was normalised and minimised within their intimate relationships. Kelly and Radford (1996) argue that

minimisation is used as a coping strategy to unwanted sexual attention and this can normalise the behaviour within the abusive relationship. However, unwanted sexual attention illustrated by the experiential group was found upon analysis to go unrecognised, and was acknowledged as 'what happens in a relationship', rather than being felt as a violation. However, as pointed out the member of the institutional group did begin to question the unwanted behaviour as she became more 'tuned' into it at the end of the interview process.

In line with Weiss (2009) coerced sex appeared to be viewed as 'normal' and a common experience for members of the experiential and institutional groups. The analysis does suggest however, that there was confusion around what actually constitutes a sexual assault within the intimate relationships. Unwanted sexual attention through 'pressurised sex' (Kelly, 1988) or what is presumed to be 'normal coercion' (Weiss, 2009) was minimised and normalised through the practice of altruism in an attempt to keep the peace. For example, respondents in the experiential consented, or not to sexual acts, which eventually became altruistic, as they felt sorry for their partner, or felt guilty in saying no. The institutional group also explained that women may just go along with it to keep the peace, and ultimately it becomes part of the norm. It was illustrated in the analysis that this rendered some respondents 'playthings' for their husband's satisfaction (see section 5.3), and upon reflection the experiential group were now able to contest this behaviour. This links with Kirkwood's (1993) understanding of 'objectification' in identifying the woman as a plaything, an object for a man's own sexual satisfaction and ultimately control.

Unwanted sexual attention was explained by the experiential and institutional groups as being understood as normal behaviour, through a belief it is part of a woman's role (see Weiss, 2009) when you are married, or in a relationship (see chapter five). This echoes the work of Weiss (2009) who found women saw it as their 'duty' normalising coercive sexual behaviour within the abusive relationship. This was evidenced by members of the institutional group who minimised and normalised 'sex to keep the peace' or in line with Weiss (2009) becomes 'normal coercion'. The behaviour is not recognised as aberrant or as an assault, as there is no physical injury accompanying the sexual assault (Weiss, 2009), it was 'just sex' (MacKinnon, 2004). There appears an internalisation of the right to consent, which has hidden the reality of coercive sex, thus normalising sexual assault within intimate relationships. The analysis highlights the complexity of consent within the intimate heterosexual relationship, and a need for this ideology to be challenged publically.

The analysis suggests that cultural ideologies of gendered roles and expectations contribute to the normalisation and minimisation of behaviours, which go unrecognised as abusive. As I have acknowledged the element of coercion and control is now within the statutory definition of domestic violence (Home Office, 2013) but, how this is defined will, as this thesis has found influence how it is understood (see section 7.5). The existing literature, as discussed in chapter two, highlights that domestic violence offers a background that allows men to uphold and impose control, and what they presume are constitutional rights within the

relationship (Wilcox, 2006). Such constitutional rights also appear to be upheld through the allocation of the finances within some heterosexual relationships.

Chapter two illustrates that research into financial abuse has been neglected until fairly recently (Wilcox, 2006). Within the academic literature it has previously been approached through understandings of emotional abuse, in terms of material and economic deprivation (Kirkwood, 1993; Hague and Malos, 2005). Wilcox (2006) argues that more attention has been given to financial violence, and its seriousness by countries, other than the UK. Therefore, the analysis gives the opportunity to build and expand on current understandings of financial abuse. It was found, as set out in chapter two, that defining financial abuse is difficult, as are other aspects of domestic violence. I would suggest however, we have to be careful not to confuse a monitored allocation of the finances, as a result of poverty, as a form of financial control. Nevertheless, financial control is an intricate element of domestic violence, and Dobash and Dobash argue that:

Money and the allocation of resources is a recurring, and important source of conflict in many relationships. Women generally view money as belonging to the family, but men on the other hand tend to feel that financial resources belong primarily to themselves (1998:147).

The analysis reflects this, for example, Philippa articulated that her husband took money on a daily basis from their account, and she was left with nothing for shopping to feed the children. If his behaviour was challenged then it was Philippa who was mean and controlling, leaving her to physically, and emotionally manage

the available finances, and debt silently. This also echoes the work of Kirkwood (1993) and Wilcox (2006) who found women were left to deal with mounting debt, and experienced poverty as a result of their partner's behaviour.

It was evidenced in the analysis of the experiential group (section, 5.4) that financial control, understandably, has an emotional base, which can be understood through the 'over burden of responsibility' (Kirkwood, 1993) on women to manage the finances. It was also recognised however, by the notional group as a reason why women stay (Murray, 2008). Commonly the 3 groups did not recognise elements of financial control, and it appeared to be normalised and tolerated through the cultural normalisation of the male being the breadwinner. The analysis shows that financial abuse has the opportunity to develop gradually through coercive behaviour, which could be seen as a partner being protective, careful, or as a result of ideas about male entitlement (see section 5.4). It was found that for members of the institutional and experiential groups husbands/partners had managed the family finances (see section 5.4), and this was normalised in their relationships. However, this behaviour has the opportunity to become progressively controlling, and limit a women's autonomy when in an abusive relationship.

Financial control was recognised as a form of domestic violence by the institutional group, but financial allocation by the husband went unchallenged in the relationships of some members. It could be argued that, in line with the definition of Women's Aid there was an element of control through the allocation and monitoring of the finances (see section 5.4). For example, Donna and Pauline acknowledged

and accepted the allocation of the finances by their husbands because they had been labelled as 'frivolous' or 'spendthrifts' (see section 5.4). However, as set out in section 5.4, Pauline began to question her relationship at the end of the interview process. This highlights the complexity of how controlling behaviour can become grounded in some heterosexual relationships, thus normalising and minimising the behaviour as part of what happens in that relationship. This normalisation was challenged by Pauline as discussed the broader understanding of domestic violence.

The word 'control' was used freely by the notional group with no question of this being a negative form of financial monitoring (Wilcox, 2006), and no recognition of financial control as a form of domestic violence. The notional group accepted the allocation of the finances by the man, as they are the 'main wage earner' (see chapter five) confirming the ideology of the male breadwinner. For example, Chelsea believed they are 'usually the ones who do control the money, as they earn it, so they presume they can keep most of it'. This suggests male entitlement is minimised and normalised through the ideology of the male breadwinner.

In line with the work of Jones and Schetcher (1992) the analysis of the notional group found that through feelings of fear of the unknown, and having to manage alone financially, women may put up with incidents of domestic violence, highlighting a form of 'entrapment'. This could prevent the behaviour being challenged, and importantly a pathway to help-seeking being sought. However, it was found upon analysis of all 3 respondent groups, that the feelings of fear were

reflected in terms of the material and financial deprivation that might result from having to start again, and this further supports why women don't leave abusive relationships. In comparison, the analysis found that the experiential group were able to name aspects of financial abuse, but this was only through personal experiences of financial violence. It was found however, that it was not until the financial abuse had been brought into the public sphere, that it had been named as a form of domestic violence.

This financial control through what was an unequal allocation of the finances, was understood as, just part of what happens in a relationship, minimising and normalising the abuse. It appears to be underpinned by a continuum of male entitlement, which normalises coercive control within the heterosexual relationship. Family finances were defined as a private issue with financial decision making and management being highlighted as 'sacrilegious' (see section 5.4). Having financial issues is suggested to be a family problem, rather than abusive, as evidenced in chapter five, and the seriousness of the act is lost, which prevents any potential help-seeking. Financial control was normalised and the dogma of the man being the breadwinner was frequently recognised during analysis by all 3 respondent groups.

The analysis also links current understandings of financial abuse as it shows that the notional and institutional groups understood the fear, in terms of where they would go, and how they would cope, both financially and materially. This suggests there is fear of impoverishment, which is in line with the work of Wilcox (2006). In

comparison, the experiential group while they also recognised the financial element of leaving the relationship, understood fear in terms of further abuse, which reflects Kirkwood's (1993) 'component of fear'. The analysis found that fear consists of many components, which influence the continuum of emotional anxiety, and for the respondents in this thesis, there was a fear of coping alone, about where to get help and about how to bring the violence into the public domain (see chapter two).

The analysis illustrates that for some respondent's in the institutional group the allocation of the finances by male partners remains a private issue, which is a normal aspect of their relationship. The control, and allocation of income is complex, and it is difficult to understand, as it hides the behaviour of abusive men who enforce and maintain what they see as male privilege (Wilcox, 2006). This research has shown that gender norms make commonplace the power men can have over the household finances in abusive heterosexual relationships (Wilcox, 2006). The normalisation and minimisation of the behaviour then implements a barrier, which strengthens the non-recognition of financial abuse, thus preventing help-seeking. I would argue as Wilcox (2006) does, this is an area that needs far more research.

The analysis has evidenced that behaviour associated with domestic violence is normalised and minimised, and I would suggest those most vulnerable are the members in the notional group. I am not saying that the institutional and experiential group fully understand domestic violence, as this thesis has shown this is not the case. However, it brings to the fore the complexities of how the knowledge of the 3 respondent group's present dramatically different understandings, which are shaped

through their social, personal and professional experiences. There is no straightforward or single answer, as to how the many barriers that prevent the recognising, and naming of domestic violence can be overcome. However, it does raise questions for government in how policy and practice can challenge the barriers, and ensure all women in society are 'tuned in' to information, which raises awareness of domestic violence.

I will return to this argument in the concluding discussion as, as I have explained throughout this thesis, help-seeking is a process that involves a series of stages, which progress as survivors' needs change over time. To begin this process, the first stage is recognising that what they are experiencing is domestic violence, this then enables a progression to the next stage, which is finding a pathway to help-seeking.

7.4. Access to help-seeking

The findings presented in chapters four, five and six have shown that accessing a pathway to help-seeking is not that straightforward. As in line with Liang et al, (2005) amongst others, this process involves a series of stages, and decisions. Firstly, domestic violence has to be recognised, named, and barriers overcome to enable help-seeking (see chapter four and five). It is at that point, if a decision is made to seek outside support, then this gives impetus to the first stage of help-seeking. The type of support that may be accessed is dependent on the type of violence (Liang et al, 2005), and the severity of the act. Prior to this point, the analysis has shown that there is no interest in any material relating to domestic

violence, as women are not ‘tuned in’ to the information, which is disseminated to raise awareness of domestic violence, and of formal help-seeking.

As discussed in chapter two, New Labour gave impetus to awareness raising campaigns following the publication of *Living without Fear* in 1999 to tackle violence against women. The publicity campaigns were aimed to reach all in society regardless of personal experience, to give general information on domestic violence, and offer sign-posting to support agencies (Home Office, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009). For example, government strategies aimed to raise awareness through:

The role of education, and consciousness-raising both amongst the statutory services, and the public in general in tackling violence against women (Hester & Westmarland, 2005:17).

This was to be the focus of both the government and local authorities, and in Sunderland as discussed this became the role of the Wearside Domestic Violence Forum (see section 2.3). While there have been several awareness campaigns run on domestic violence since 1999, and local campaigns (Sunderland Echo and white bus campaign), the analysis of the experiential and notional groups demonstrates that if women are not ‘tuned in’, then it will be overlooked. This demonstrates a need for a different approach to make the information more personally relevant, rather than specific local and national campaigns in response to a specific time or incident.

Prior to this thesis there appeared very little research that had explored the knowledge women have about help-seeking regardless of their experience of domestic violence. Therefore, the analysis was informed through the understandings of survivors help-seeking behaviour (see Fugate et al, 2005; Leone et al, 2007; Liang et al, 2005; Moe, 2007; Postmus et al, 2009; Wilcox, 2006). The discussion in this section brings to the fore the knowledge of the notional experiential and institutional groups and their understandings of informal and formal networks and the signposting of help-seeking intervention.

It is well documented within the existing literature that informal networks are the preferred choice by survivors of domestic violence but, there has been little research into informal networks and the impact they may have on the help-seeking process (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001); Moe, 2007; Wilcox, 2000, 2006). This thesis presents the opportunity to expand on the current knowledge base of help-seeking through the personal experiences of the experiential group, but also contribute to that knowledge through the understandings of help-seeking by the notional and institutional groups. Understandings of informal networks are crucial as they are predominantly a woman's first or only step to help-seeking in response to domestic violence (Chatzifotiou and Dobash, 2001).

In line with the existing literature the analysis highlights that similarly, the 3 respondent groups would approach family, and/or close friends as route to support if they experienced domestic violence. The findings however, suggest this pathway to

help-seeking by the notional group was based on privacy and trust, and what would be predominantly for emotional support. Previous research into survivors help-seeking behaviour has found that privacy has prevented women bringing the violence into the public sphere (Fugate et al, 2005), and this was evidenced by Linda (notional group) who identified she would not want it to go any further. The analysis has found that the notional group had very little knowledge of specialist services responding to domestic violence in Sunderland, and therefore had little or no knowledge of what service provision was available. The police were identified as a support mechanism by a member of the notional group but this was in response to actual bodily harm, suggesting the response reflected an association of the police with crime detection rather than prevention.

A study by Fugate et al, (2005) on survivors' experiences of domestic violence found that many women reported not being aware of social support, or how to access it. Fugate et al, (2005) went on to suggest that this may be because they were not aware of the services that respond to domestic violence. However, the analysis suggests that the information may be overlooked if it is not needed at that time, therefore they are not 'tuned in' to it. This was confirmed in the analysis of the experiential group who had been signposted to formal support by friends (see chapter six), as it was found that help-seeking information had been overlooked, as it had been thought it would not be needed. It is illustrated that, following their personal experiences, they are now more 'tuned in' to information that is disseminated to raise awareness of domestic violence.

The analysis found there was no significant difference in knowledge in terms of class position as discussed in section 3.9. However, accounts of women in both the experiential and institutional groups can be seen to draw on social capital (Bourdieu, 1984) in so far as they were able to access potential sources of support through their social and professional networks. For example, some members of the experiential group were able to find a pathway to help-seeking through their individual social networks. This support then enabled the positive transition of a private wrong to be recognised as a public concern. The respondents' involvement with their specific social group or network determined who and what support would be accessed, if any at all (see p:132 and chapter six).

The institutional group, as the findings chapters highlight, gained their knowledge of domestic violence through their professional remit. As discussed in section 3.9 Bourdieu's theory of social capital links with aspects of cultural capital and this includes access to education and training, which through the professional remit of the members in the institutional group enabled a greater understanding of domestic violence. Therefore, links within the professional network enabled a sense of similarity with others in the group (see Bourdieu, 1984; Burkitt, 2008). The experiential and notional group identified that their social networks would be the preferred route for support as and when they thought it would be needed. The social network of some in the experiential group did signpost formal support bringing the issue into the public arena. However, within the notional group it is not known if their social network is able to recognise a private wrong as a public issue.

Significantly no interest was shown by the notional group of the services available to women that respond to domestic violence until such time they are needed. This raises the question that the information signposting help-seeking intervention may be at hand, but the respondents choose to ignore it as it is of no interest to them at that point. A sticker signposting the National Domestic Violence Helpline number was discussed by a member of the notional group (see chapter six) but, it was only acknowledged and recognised as she was participating in this research. This illustrates that it was not until the topic was named, that there became an interest, which resulted in notice being taken of what was around to raise awareness of domestic violence, and of help-seeking. This was also reiterated by a member of the institutional group (see section 4.1)

The experiential group presented a significant difference in knowledge to that of the notional and institutional groups. The positioning of the experiential group enabled recognition of the stages, and difficulties in the process of help-seeking when in an abusive relationship. The analysis reflects not only existing evidence (Fugate et al, 2005; Liang et al, 2005), but it also expands that knowledge by bringing to the fore a series of decisions, which influences a progression in the process of help-seeking. The evidence suggests that as the needs of the experiential group changed, so did their progression of help-seeking, and the type of help sought was dependent on those needs at that time. As pointed out throughout this thesis, a survivor's experience of domestic violence was not the focus of this thesis, however, the knowledge of the experiential group are valuable in this chapter as it illustrates each stage in the process of help-seeking, building on the work of Liang et al, (2005).

The analysis in this thesis suggests that the lack of knowledge that the notional and experiential groups have of women's services responding to domestic violence, was influenced through a need-to-know basis. As I explained in chapter three and six, at the beginning of the interview process all respondents were handed a list of support agencies in the event they were needed after the interview process. However, respondents in the notional group did not look at the sheet until they started to talk about formal agencies but even then this prompt did not influence any recognition of any agencies in Sunderland.

Gondolf and Fisher (1998) argue however, that women are active help-seekers, suggesting that if support was needed women would find it. This was echoed by members in the experiential group who had experienced total isolation (see section, 6.1), but eventually managed to access their informal network. The route to formal help-seeking however, was only utilised following a series of decisions, and the progression to formal support was based on the violence type, and the needs of the survivor at that time (see section 6.2). It was found however, that not all members of the experiential group progressed to formal support if they had received a positive response from their informal network. However, reaching out for help was a lengthy process, and the decision to seek help started with recognising and naming the behaviour as abusive, which then progressed over time to prompt help-seeking.

Upon analysis it was found the institutional group would approach friends initially to clarify that the behaviour they were experiencing was domestic violence. This clarification in the first step of help-seeking would be to 'name it' (see section 6.1),

and this was suggested in the narrative of the notional group. This was also found in the work of Wilcox (2006) who identified women may look for validation from friends. In line with the work of Moe (2007), it was found that the most common support needed from family or female friends was talking and listening, in other words giving emotional support.

However, as I have pointed out clarification from others could present difficulties due to the complexity of domestic violence. This decision to seek clarification has the possibility of halting help-seeking as found upon analysis of the experiential group (see chapter six), and this is discussed further in this section. It has to be considered that what may be harm to one person may be tolerated, normalised or minimised in the relationship of another. I would argue as does Wilcox (2006) that more in-depth research is needed into informal networks in an attempt to understand the type of support women receive. It would also help to ascertain if survivors are missing out on specialist support, which helps women move on with their lives in the long-term.

As I have discussed in chapter six, the institutional group presented a broader knowledge of service provision in the City, which was informed through their professional roles. It was found that the institutional group named WWIN as the main responder to domestic violence in the City (see section 6.3), as that was the agency that the services referred clients to for refuge and counselling provision. This suggests they acknowledge the specialist service as the main responder in Sunderland to domestic violence, and an integral part of the multi-agency

framework. What was surprising was that no member of the institutional group identified the agency that they were employed by as a support network responding to domestic violence.

The analysis does suggest however, that some members in the institutional group do lack the knowledge of the wider services responding to domestic violence, as it is not just crisis support that may be needed by women (see section 6.3 and 6.4) (see Wilcox, 2000). The institutional group however, were able to present knowledge of the services that the notional and experiential groups did not have, but it was reflected through their individual agency procedures, and it was apparent they were limited to that remit (Allen and Willis, 2008). The knowledge of the institutional group about raising awareness of domestic violence was influenced through their professional positions. It was found that the only information the institutional group recognised that signposted a pathway to help-seeking was within their places of work, and nothing had been identified publically within the community. The analysis suggests that when the institutional group are out of the work place the signposting of information is missed, as it is of no interest to them at that time, suggesting they are not 'tuned in'.

It was found upon analysis of the experiential group that it was not until crisis point was reached that the full extent of the violence was disclosed to informal networks and, this was not always positive for survivors. Prior to informal help-seeking the data suggests there was self-management of the behaviour through individual coping strategies, which became exhausted prompting the decision to seek help

outside of the relationship (Liang et al, 2005). This process was dependent on the response the survivor received from the informal network and in line with Liang et al, (2005:81) it was found:

Negative responses from friends and family may inhibit a woman from leaving or accessing social support resources.

The decision to seek help appeared to be influenced by a severity or intensification of the violence, which then prompted a decision to move help-seeking to the next stage, which echoes the work of Goodman et al, (2003). It was found however, that the decision to actively seek help by the experiential group through informal networks was a stage in the process, rather than a definitive end to the relationship, as it was found members did return to their partners numerous times (see section 6.1.1). The analysis echoed the work of Moe (2007) who found women returned to their partners many times through financial constraints or through loving them.

The analysis of the experiential group suggests there is a link between informal and formal networks, as found in the work of Wilcox (2000, 2006). Respondents in the experiential group identified that their informal networks acted as mediators in the progression to formal support. As discussed in chapter two and six, friends are identified as excellent mediators between a survivor's family and social agencies in obtaining greater support (Wilcox, 2000, 2006) highlighting the importance of both networks. The interrelation (Wilcox, 2006) of both formal and informal networks

needs further understanding in an attempt to improve future help-seeking intervention.

Accessing support is not straightforward as survivors support needs do change over time, and the type of support varies depending on the violence experienced at any one time (see section 6.1.1). It was found that primarily a listening ear is needed, and then confirmation of whether or not what they are experiencing is domestic violence. It is in the later stages of the process that more 'specialist support' (Wilcox, 2006) was required by some in the experiential group but not all members of the group utilised formal agencies.

The analysis has shown that despite the work of domestic violence service agencies to raise awareness of domestic violence the notional and experiential groups lacked knowledge of the formal resources available. This thesis has found that there is little knowledge in all 3 groups of emotional or practical support networks to assist women in the varying stages of help-seeking. New Labour policy protocols and support agencies have worked to increase early identification of domestic violence by both women and professionals (Home Office, 1999; 2003; 2005; 2009). However, as I have explained this lack of awareness may be influenced through the 'need to know basis' as suggested by the notional and experiential groups. It was found it is not until help is needed in response to a problem or a collective of 'symptoms' that help would then sought.

A respondent in the experiential group, upon reflection of her experiences, referred to behaviours associated with domestic violence as 'symptoms' (p:167). This illustrates the complexity of low-level abusive behaviour, which becomes normalised and minimised, which ultimately prevents the recognition of the behaviour as abusive. It is not until 'symptoms' are then recognised as a whole that they become problematic (see chapter four and five), then a decision is made to seek help through informal networks. Further progression of help-seeking is dependent upon: responses from informal networks, the intensity or severity of the violence, whether individual coping strategies have been exhausted, or a belief that the violence will not stop without outside intervention. It is at that point that a decision is made to seek specialist support (see chapter six), and it is then that there develops a need to identify a route to specialist support. If formal intervention is accessed this may be through a mediator, or the survivor then looks for information signposting support as they are then 'tuned in'.

However, I am not saying that progression of help-seeking is linear as I recognise diversity, and the decision to seek help depends on the: circumstances of the woman, type of abuse, severity, and the response from the informal network. The findings in this thesis have presented the opportunity to build on the current theoretical understandings of help-seeking by survivors, and the suggestion by Leone et al, (2007) that help-seeking is 'needs-based'. What the analysis has shown is that it is not as straightforward as simply help-seeking. It begins with a complex process of a series of decisions, and women need to be 'tuned in' at the

earliest possible opportunity to gain an understanding of what domestic violence is to enable the process of help-seeking to begin if it was needed.

7.5. Implications for this research: the impact of austerity

The fieldwork for this research, as discussed, was completed prior to the new Coalition Government coming into power in 2010. However, during the write up of this thesis there have been significant changes made by the new Coalition Government that impacts on this research. The new Coalition Government pledged to build on and improve the work of New Labour in the fight to eradicate violence against women. The Conservative Party had published the *Ending Violence Against Women Strategy (2008)*, and the focus was on prevention in line with New Labour. The *Call to end violence against women and girls: strategic vision* published in 2010 aimed to:

Prevent violence from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours, intervening early where possible to prevent it, provide adequate support where violence does occur, work in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families, take action to reduce the risk to women and girls who are victims of these crimes, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice (Home Office, 2010:5).

However, while this rhetoric is set out within their strategic reports the coalition's serious austerity measures have severely impacted on service provision responding to domestic violence (see Towers and Walby, 2012). Nevertheless, there have been some positive steps forward.

One significant step forward was the widening of the definition of domestic violence. Following a consultation in 2011 the Government included coercive and controlling behaviour, and included 16-17 year olds within the Home Office definition (Home Office, 2012), which came into force in march 2013. Domestic violence for people under the age of 18 years old was previously understood within the framework of child abuse. However, the Home Office now considers this to be inappropriate for teenage relationships where the abuse is perpetrated by a partner, and is similar to adult domestic violence (Women's Aid, 2013).

The inclusion of persons aged 16-17 years raises concerns surrounding the terminology, and how it is understood by young people. This research has shown the difficulties of recognising behaviour within an intimate relationship as domestic violence, regardless of age group. The NSPCC (2009) found in a study that '75% of girls had experienced some form of emotional abuse', and '33% had experienced sexual abuse' (see Barter et al, 2009). This is concerning as it was found in this research that emotional and sexual abuse are going unrecognised as a form of domestic violence within intimate relationships. In addition, this inclusion will put a greater strain on already stretched service resources responding not only to the needs of younger people, but also the acknowledgement of coercive control as part of the definition of domestic violence (Women's Aid, 2013).

Coercive control was a welcomed inclusion, as it has been raised by feminist activists, researchers and academics for decades as a key factor of domestic violence (Stark, 2007, 2009, 2012; Weiss, 2009; Women's Aid, 2011), and this is

echoed in this research. The analysis shows that coercive control encompasses emotional, sexual and financial abuse, which can have the most damaging and long-lasting effects on women (Kirkwood, 1993; Stark, 2007, 2009; Wilcox, 2006). This research has brought to the fore the complexity of recognising and naming elements of coercive control (see chapter four and five), therefore, it is hoped this inclusion within the definition will bring a greater emphasis in raising awareness of what coercive control actually is.

The focus of the Coalition Government is on prevention and the Government recently implemented Claire's law⁹. The scheme named after Claire Wood who was murdered by a violent partner was rolled out this year (2014), and is aimed to prevent women becoming involved with violent men. However, it is reliant upon women enquiring about their new partners through their local police. While it has been welcomed there is also caution, as it is feared it may leave many women vulnerable if they believe they are safe (Refuge, 2013). It is illustrated in this research of the difficulties women face recognising low level coercive behaviour, but if a woman feels they are safe, as they have been told their partner is not abusive, this could then add to the complexity of recognising and naming domestic violence.

While both changes are a step forward, the austerity measures put in place by the current government has unfortunately impacted severely on the services for women in the community. Indeed, the newly elected Theresa May in her speech at the 36th

⁹ Clare's Law is a scheme allowing police to disclose details of an abusive partners' past to prospective partners.

Annual Women's Aid National Conference 2010, stated violence against women was a priority for her, now her party was in government. It was in that same speech however, that the MP went on to say the spending review in the autumn would involve some tough financial decisions (May, 2010), and undoubtedly this has impacted significantly on women's services nationally.

A report by Walby and Towers (2012:1) on the impact of the cuts on violence against women services identifies that:

31% of funding to the sector was cut by local authorities between 2010/11 and 2011/12, a reduction from £7.8m to £5.4m. The organisations with smaller budgets from the local authorities had more substantial budget cuts than larger ones: among those with local authority funding of less than £20,000 the average cut was 70% as compared with 29% for those receiving over £100,000, between 2010/11 and 2011/12.

The report has also found that the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVA) was reduced in 2011. Among eight of the major IDVA service providers two of those providers faced funding cuts of 100%. Indeed, Women's Aid (2011:1) expressed grave concerns that from the 1st April 2011, 60% of refuge services and 72% of outreach services would have no funding agreed. This impact of the cuts on specialist domestic and sexual violence services is leaving many women at risk of abuse. For example: Women's Aid (2012) estimated that 27,900 women had to be turned away by refuge services that they had approached as there was no space.

Sunderland has not been exempt from the funding cuts and WWIN have felt the impact through both local and national funding. The leading charity (WWIN) faces £400,000 of cuts to its services and support for women in Sunderland is at risk due to massive Government cuts (Phillipson, 2013). There has been a reported rise of domestic violence incidents in Sunderland, but the support workers have warned that cuts to support funding are leaving already vulnerable women exposed to further abuse (Wearside Women In Need, 2013). For instance:

In terms of our own workload, we have been cut, we can no longer meet the demand we have. We have had to close one project and make staff redundant. The fear is we are starting to build up a legacy that cannot be undone. There will come a point where we will miss things, attackers and victims will slip through the net (Phillipson, 2013:1).

In 2013 Women's Aid declared a state of crisis within service provision as the charity's Annual Survey revealed appalling gaps in funding and provision for women experiencing domestic violence (Women's Aid, 2013). Women's Aid (2013) raised concerns that the network of domestic violence providers in England was likely to collapse. The Government continued with the rhetoric in its *Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Girls*, which it released for international Women's Day. However, Women's Aid (2013) quickly urged the government to realise that the Action Plan would fail unless funding cuts on specialist domestic violence services was dealt stopped and the funding improved. This is devastating for the services responding to domestic violence. Nationally and locally women are being turned away from services as there is not sufficient provision.

The aim of the Coalition Government is to have increased an awareness of violence against women and girls by 2015 (Home Office, 2013). However, locally specialist services responding to domestic violence are struggling, as discussed, and do not have the resources to implement campaigns, focussing predominantly on crisis provision. As this research has found, women do not fully understand what constitutes domestic violence, and there is little knowledge of routes to help-seeking, regardless of experience, with some women more vulnerable than others. In line with this research Avon UK, Refuge and Women's Aid have recently released new research statistics on women's recognition of domestic violence and the services responding to domestic violence (see Women's Aid, 2013).

The research carried out by Avon UK has found that many women do not understand domestic violence. It has found that:

Regardless of women recognising domestic violence as being the problem that is most likely to affect them during their lifetime, a third of all respondents (33%) would not know where to seek support (Women's Aid, 2013:1).

In line with the findings in this thesis (see section 5.4) regarding financial abuse, their research found that:

Just over half of the sample (51.1%) either disagreed (35.1%), or didn't know (16%) whether a partner making all the monetary decisions is domestic violence (Women's Aid, 2013:1).

The research, is part of Avon's '*Speaking Out in Her Name*' campaign, and the findings of this research were to be presented at the Houses of Parliament in March 2013. The campaign is calling for domestic violence to get the same level of response as drink driving or other high level issues (Women's Aid, 2013).

As the findings in this thesis show there is a need to 'tune in' women to the information that raises awareness of domestic violence, and routes to help-seeking. The research by Avon UK, Refuge and Women's Aid also raises questions as to how the information raising awareness of domestic violence is disseminated. The identification of the different understandings of the 3 respondent groups in this research suggests that a more tiered approach to awareness raising may be needed. This would enable attention to be given to different levels of prevention and protection in an attempt to 'tune in' all women regardless of experience.

7.6. Methods

I chose feminist standpoint for this research as explained in chapter three, as it enabled me to begin my research from the lives of women (Harding, 1987). This has not only allowed for the women's subjective accounts, but also of how the women made sense of the world around them. As a feminist who is passionate about improving the lives of women standpoint allowed me to give 'voice' to the respondents in this research, allowing their narrative to be heard and understood. Standpoint enabled me as a researcher to listen to, and apply their narratives to the

production of 'justifiable knowledge' (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002) in this research.

The positioning of myself in the field by acknowledging shared experiences was influenced through my own standpoint (see section 3.3). This visibility through shared experiences helped me to position myself and attempt to challenge the power imbalance in the field work. This process helped me to glean the in-depth narrative that produced this research, collating narrative on the experiences of women that had not been disclosed previously. Understanding positionality through the reflexive process also enabled the recognition of the positioning of the respondents in the 3 groups in this research.

Reflexivity as discussed in chapter three, was at the heart of this research and presents the opportunity to build on current standpoint practices of reflexivity. This process has enabled me as a researcher to examine and understand how my own background could have intervened in the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). Reflexivity however, for me was more than simply reflection it encompassed the emotions of those lived experiences for both the respondents and the researcher. It was through reflexivity of the fieldwork processes that emerged what I have coined an 'ontological transition' (see section 3.4).

Reflexive practice in this study has highlighted the impact awareness-raising can have during and after the fieldwork process. For example, the respondents became

more aware of what they had experienced and how they had understood their experiences at the time (see section 3.4). This process of change in awareness or knowledge brought a sense of empowerment and challenged their lived realities. For some respondents, as set out in section 3.12, this questioned their ontology. Crucially, as the analysis of the respondent interviews highlights, one characteristic of the ontological transition is the impact of shame. It was found that the experience of shame is not confined to a particular social positioning or related to faith or ethnicity (see Gill, 2003). Through talking about their experiences of shame respondents were able to consider a different relationship. Some respondents were able to reject shame as they recognised that their experience was not a personal one but a collective of abusive experiences, thus resulting in an 'ontological transition' (see section 3.4 and section 3.12).

Ontological transitions were individual as depths of emotion and pain varied (see section 3.4 and section 3.12). This study has found that a form of consciousness-raising (see Stanley and Wise, 1983, 1993) through being involved in research can occur and help women as it changes their level of knowledge and understanding, giving them a greater sense of control over their lives. Significantly, as a consequence of this process of empowerment an 'ontological transition' occurred as the respondents questioned their lived realities. For example, through a raised awareness respondents began to reconfigure what had become normalised behaviour as abusive behaviours that oppressed them within their individual relationships. This re-configuring of their lived reality however, brought a sense of

responsibility as to how they could challenge and change their current situations (see section 3.4 and 3.12).

Feminist standpoint enabled me to capture not only experiences and knowledge, but importantly the voices and emotion of the respondents who kindly participated. With this at the fore I utilised thematic analysis as my coding strategy (see section 3.10) as it allowed the 'data to speak' (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2009:159), and the voices of the women to be heard. Thematic analysis enabled me to focus on what has been said, rather than how it was said (Bryman, 2008) and gave consideration to reflexivity in the process. This approach linked the epistemology and my feminist standpoint as it allowed me as the 'researcher to keep the language of the respondent as far as possible' (Bryman, 2008:554). This was vital to the process as through my positioning in the field, and the practice of shared experiences it ensured only the narrative of the respondents was included in the analysis.

7.7. Limitations of the study

For the purpose of the thesis, the research was limited to the geographical area of Sunderland therefore the knowledge of help-seeking intervention are specific to this area. However, the findings could be generalised to other similar urban centres as the City of Sunderland is one of the larger cities nationally (UK Cities, 2014) (see section 3.1) and adopted the domestic violence forum structure, which is typical of other cities. As including women, regardless of their experiences, was a relatively

new area of research, the initial research design proved difficult as literature in the area of research was limited. It was this that prompted the mixed method approach (see section 3.5), and the on-line survey was utilised as a secondary tool (see section 3.8). This enabled the recruitment of a broad sample, and informed the qualitative phase of the research process.

Response to the on-line survey was low however, and a greater response rate had been anticipated. However, given web surveys were a relatively new concept at the time this should not have been a disappointment. It may have also been because of the topic, as it is well documented that participants are reluctant to engage in research relating to sensitive issues as it can be thought intrusive (Renzetti & Lee, 1993). Responses may also have been limited by some agencies who displayed the survey for a limited period of time, and a longer posting may have enhanced the return rate. The qualitative phase (see section 3.9) included 20 women of varied ages, which were chosen from a sample of 50 who had volunteered to participate. Given the limitations and time scale of this thesis unfortunately it was not possible to include more women in the sample.

7.8 Future Research

Considering the limitations, and the significance of this research, national research would be beneficial to ascertain if there are similar respondent groups in other geographical areas, to ascertain if their awareness is informed through their

personal, professional and/or social positioning. This would also allow for a more in-depth analysis of the knowledge of women about domestic violence, and help-seeking regardless of their experiences. This may help ascertain if policy and practice responding to domestic violence needs to incorporate a more tiered needs-based approach to prevention and protection. For example, there may be a need for campaigns to challenge what is accepted as normal gendered behaviours, which present the opportunity to become abusive in heterosexual relationships, and discussions of what love allows and can hide in intimate relationships. It is key that women are 'tuned in' to information raising awareness of domestic violence and routes to help-seeking.

I would also suggest there needs to be more in-depth research on the process of informal help-seeking. Research looking at the families of survivors would help to understand the family's responses upon disclosure, and their knowledge of the help-seeking process. Indeed, Wilcox (2006) has argued that understanding a woman's support history is imperative in shaping future help-seeking interventions. Understanding the informal network may also inform the interrelationship (Wilcox, 2006) between informal and formal networks that also needs attention.

7.9 Concluding Thoughts: Implications for policy and practice

The respondents knowledge of domestic violence was influenced by their personal, professional and social positioning that influenced how they defined and understood

domestic violence, which was slightly, and at times significantly different. The social positioning of the notional group I would argue presented a greater vulnerability through the non-recognition of emotional, sexual and financial abuse, and of help-seeking. The experiential and institutional group presented a broader knowledge of domestic violence however, there were still vulnerabilities, and this challenges how domestic violence is defined and understood by all women. This as I have suggested requires more in-depth research to ascertain if group types are reflected nationally in an attempt to determine how domestic violence is understood, and how we educate the hard to reach notional group?

Emotional, sexual and financial abuse needs greater attention, firstly it needs to be defined more broadly, and brought into the public sphere enabling the behaviour to be challenged. The emotional base underpins all aspects of domestic violence and this research has exposed a normalisation and minimisation that goes unchallenged through male entitlement, and acts of altruism by women in an attempt to maintain a harmonious relationship. Allocation of the finances through coercive control also needs greater attention to expand the knowledge base of domestic violence. The aspect of love needs to be included in definitions and understandings of emotional abuse (Donovan and Hester, 2009; Wilcox, 2006) to raise awareness of the intricacy of the element of love within an abusive relationship.

One of the key objectives of Government is to prevent domestic violence happening through early intervention by changing public attitudes (Home Office, 2010, 2013). However, to prevent it happening in the first place there needs to be a societal

understanding of what domestic violence actually is, and of the myriad of behaviours that are encompassed under that term. Attention also needs to be given to signposting through a more tiered needs-based approach. For example, general information to raise awareness about domestic violence, information raising awareness of prevention, and information regarding higher levels of support around protection to ensure that it captures the attention and ‘tunes in’ women to the information regardless of their knowledge and experiences.

I would also suggest there needs to be a challenge against the belief of ‘this is what happens in a relationship’, and the one-off act of consent, which assumes once a woman agrees to being in a relationship then through the ‘principles of choice and consent’ the man has a right to do as he pleases with the woman. There appears no recognition of the right to negotiate consent at any time within the relationship. This brings into question government definitions of domestic violence as the analysis has illustrated that a much broader definition is needed if all women are to understand the full extent of domestic violence. This may present implications for policy and practice however, in order to prevent domestic violence happening women need to be aware of the low-level manipulative, and coercive behaviours that can trap a woman in an abusive relationship, and prevent any potential help-seeking.

This thesis has brought to the fore the intricacy of help-seeking and it is not simply about knowing what services are available in the City. There are a series of stages that occur before a woman reaches out for support and this has been evidenced in this research. The progression to actually reaching a pathway to help-seeking is

lengthy, and dependent on a series of decisions and stages. Informal routes need greater attention as suggested above in an attempt to understand, and prevent negative responses that inhibits a woman leaving a violent relationship (Liang et al., 2005).

The findings also present implications for service provision as it is apparent support services may not be well integrated into communities (Fugate et al, 2005) through the lack of knowledge of the services. Few members of the experiential group accessed formal support in this research suggesting that there may be a need for more low-level support, or as a survivor in this research suggested, more long-term outreach to help with resettlement. It could mean there needs to be more informal spaces for women however, this needs further attention. The recommendations I am aware presents implications for policy and practice however, as I have suggested, a more tiered needs-based approach may be required in an attempt to raise awareness of domestic violence, and of routes to help-seeking.

This research has found that when a woman is harmed by her partner or husband there is a feeling of shock and disbelief. This questions the bond of trust, and feelings of love that underpin the relationship, and recognising the behaviour beyond a relationship problem is complex. The violence can go unrecognised as domestic violence, which then can become normalised, minimised and tolerated within the relationship. The abusive behaviours are hidden between the intimate couple, and possibly the extended family protecting the perpetrator from criminal intervention, until such a time the violence intensifies. Individual autonomy ultimately

enables a pathway to help-seeking however, the progression to support is lengthy, and women can experience repeated abuse. It is the first stage in this process that needs to be challenged, help-seeking is a process, and that process starts with recognising what is being experienced is domestic violence thus, enabling women to approach a pathway to help-seeking.

As in the words of a survivor:

I think the first thing you have to do is realise it is happening to you, because if it is more manipulative and more control than out right violence then it is more difficult. I got to a point where I knew that the relationship was over, I knew the relationship was not good for me and I knew I didn't want the relationship anymore, but what do I do? [Phillipa]

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Northumbria Police Definition

Northumbria Police Definition (2009)

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or are family members, regardless of gender and sexuality .

Appendix 2 –Respondent Groups

Experiential group

Interview Four – Leanne, 35yrs

Leanne was prompted to participate through her sister's experiences of domestic violence that sparked the interest in domestic violence, as they had been lost as to where to get support.

Interview Five – Abhijita, 44yrs

Abhijita had wanted to participate as she believed by talking about her personal experiences, which she had not spoken of before would help her healing process. Additionally Abhijita explained if this work would help just one person, then she felt some good would have come out of her heinous experiences.

Interview Eight – Sarah, 36yrs.

Sarah disclosed she had experienced repeated domestic violence and wanted to participate if it would prevent other women experiencing what she had. Through her experiences Sarah was knowledgeable of the formal agencies responding to domestic violence.

Interview Nine – Beth, 28yrs

Beth participated as she feels more awareness needs to be raised of all the behaviours that are encompassed under the term domestic violence. Beth's personal experiences were not recognised or named as domestic violence until crisis point was reached.

Interview Fourteen – Philippa, 43yrs

Philippa explained if this work had been conducted 6 months earlier she would not have spoken to me, but now she feels if any good can come from the research to stop others going through what she has then it is a good thing. It was defining the domestic violence that Philippa had been interested in as she did not recognise that was what she was experiencing.

Interview Seventeen – Jessica, 30yrs

Jessica had lived alone since her domestically violence relationship that had ended after she went into a refuge 2 years prior. Jessica completed the survey as it is an area she is interested in and hopes to study violence against women in the future.

Interview Twenty – Jodie, 20yrs

Jodie participated as she had experiences of domestic violence but had not recognised the behaviour at the time, it had been her mum that had managed to name it and eventually get her home. This was a short interview as Jodie had very limited knowledge.

Institutional Group

Interview Two – Marie, 32yrs

Marie worked in front-line service provision in the South of the city and had been in that role for around 2 years. Her role meant she came into contact with women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Interview Three –Pauline, 54yrs

Pauline worked in front-line service provision in the city and had done so for over 20 years. Pauline at the onset of the interview process stated there was no domestic violence in her family, but her mother-in-law was a survivor after experiencing years of violence and that is why she had chosen to participate. However, it became evident that there was domestic violence within the relationship.

Interview Seven – Rose, 52yrs,

Rose had worked in front-line services for most of her working life. Rose came into contact with women and children experiencing domestic violence. It was also disclosed during the interview that Rose had experienced domestic violence in her first relationship. Rose participated as she felt if she could experience it, an educated, middle-class woman that presumed she understood and knew what domestic violence was, then anyone could experience it.

Interview Ten – Jennifer, 47yrs

Jennifer had worked within children's services most of her working life. Jennifer had said she found the survey interesting regarding the listing of behaviours associated with domestic violence as usually you don't see that. It had made Jennifer realise that she did not fully understand the dynamics of domestic violence and any research into improving the lives of women was welcome. Jennifer had experience of historical domestic violence between her parents.

Interview Eleven – Donna, 27yrs

Donna had worked in front-line service provision for around 5 years but her knowledge of domestic violence and help-seeking was minimal, and focused on

referrals to WWIN. This was a short interview as Donna had minimal knowledge and she recognised after the interview that she needed more training.

Interview Thirteen – Theresa – 63yrs

Theresa was now retired and lived with her husband. Theresa now focused on her role as a magistrate and through this role she is very interested in the subject.

Interview Sixteen – Susan, 23yrs

Susan had only recently started her role as a social worker in the last 6 months and was interested in domestic violence from a professional perspective. Susan had experienced a serious incident of domestic violence and she believes if she had known when the control had started what it was she would have been able to prevent the progression.

Interview Eighteen – Christine, 49yrs

Christine works in front-line service provision and is in contact with survivors on a daily basis. Christine disclosed she had lived alone after leaving her abusive relationship a number of years ago.

Notional Group

Interview One - Linda, 64yrs

This lady had just retired and was a member of the local church. This lady was apprehensive as she said she had little knowledge of what domestic violence was and she did not know if she could help.

Interview Six – Chelsea, 19yrs

Chelsea's interest had been sparked after someone in the shop had spoken to her about their experiences of domestic violence, and she did not understand what it was. The interview was short as Chelsea was very limited in her knowledge.

Interview fifteen – Alice, 64yrs

Alice lived with her husband and both were retired in a residential part of the city. Alice completed the on-line survey after being told about it by her friend. Alice had very little knowledge or understanding of domestic violence so this was very short interview.

Interview Twelve – Norma, 57yrs

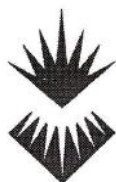
Normal lived with her husband and daughter and all the family worked full time. Norma had participated as she knew little about domestic violence but was keen to know more.

Interview Nineteen – Amy, 21yrs

Amy had said she had an interest in domestic violence but she had little knowledge, so this prompted her to participate. She suggested this would make her think about it, and learn more. The interview was short as Amy had limited knowledge.

Appendix 3 – Ethics Application

eth11.doc



**University of
Sunderland**

Application Number

Date 29/09/2009

ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR WORK WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

All university research in which people are participants or the research uses human cells, tissues or fluids, or the work requires access to medical records, must be reviewed for ethical approval by the University Ethics Committee. There are a few exceptions listed in the application guidelines.

<http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/research/governance/>

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: (Member of staff responsible for work)

Name: Dr Catherine Donovan

Post Held: Reader in Sociology

Qualifications:

UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

Faculty of Education & Society

CO-WORKERS (eg. students)

Angela Wilcock PhD student

Created by: R. Pullen

Approved by: Ethics Committee

Version 12, Nov, 2007

THE STUDY

Title of Project: Domestic Violence: An exploration of how help seeking intervention information is understood by the general public.

- Online questionnaire to be hosted in the autumn 2009
- One to one interviews to take place in spring 2010
- Project ends Winter 2011

This research is part of a PhD thesis exploring what knowledge the general public have on help seeking intervention in relation to domestic violence. This will hopefully allow for an understanding of why many survivors of domestic violence fail to seek intervention. The study does not specifically target people who have experienced domestic violence but has a focus on what information people have on help-seeking interventions in relation to domestic violence.

Use separate sheets if necessary

Where will your project take place?

The online questionnaire is to be posted on the Gentoo and City of Sunderland Domestic Violence websites for which permission has been granted. Wearside Women In need may also be utilised. A venue for the one to one interviews is to be confirmed however, the interests of the respondents will be paramount ensuring safety for both the interviewer and interviewee. Whilst I recognise both male and female respondents may complete the questionnaire only female participants will be invited to take part in the qualitative phase.

Funding? Self

Participants:

(1) How many: 15-20 one to one interviews

(2) Age: Under 16 yrs ☐ Over 16 yrs ☒

(3) Sex: Male ☐ Female ☒

(4) Status of Participants: Vulnerable persons ☐ Public ☒ Students ☐

Study Information: An example information sheet is attached.

Written Consent: An example written consent form is attached

Questionnaire/Interview: The questions / theme are attached. Both the questionnaire and interview questions are subject to piloting/amendments but are indicative of the areas of exploration intended in this study.

Data Protection & Freedom of Information

- Please confirm that you are aware of and will comply with The Data Protection Act (1998) which includes that you may not release certain personal information.

✓

- Please confirm that you are aware of and will comply with The Freedom of Information Act (2000) which includes that information held in this application might have to be released to the public on demand.

✓

Risks and Hazards

What do you consider are the risks to the subjects ?

- Emotional harm may impact on a participant. Although the study is not focussed on those who have experienced domestic violence it is entirely possible that people who have experienced domestic violence will read it and may take part. This may lead to their becoming emotionally upset as a result of being reminded of their experiences.

State precautions to minimise the risks.

- Participation is entirely voluntary. Those who complete the questionnaire may not complete and/or submit it and can opt out of the interviews. It is not envisaged that many will volunteer for the interviews. For those who do, reassurance of confidentiality and withdrawal at any point will be ensured. Contact details for the relevant support agencies will also be given to every participant, including at the end of the questionnaire.

What discomfort (physical or psychological) danger or interference with normal activities might be suffered by the subject?

- None

State precautions to minimise them: N/A

NRES / LREC : Your application will also have to be approved by the ethics committee of a local NHS Trust if it falls into any of these categories: N/A

- Participants are NHS Patients recruited via the NHS making the NHS party to the research,
- Participants are NHS Employees recruited via the NHS making the NHS party to the research,
- Requires 'Caldicott Approval' to access medical records,
- Uses procedures which give substances to people,
- Uses procedures that involve taking bio samples from people,
- Uses any invasive procedure

If so, obtain the ethics application form from university ethics website.

Also Note: If you wish to work on the premises of a Trust you will probably also need:

- a) An Honorary contract from them and
- b) A criminal disclosure

Work with children and vulnerable adults:

The Chief Investigator of this study and all listed co-workers will be required to have an enhanced Criminal Disclosure before the study starts if any participants in the study are:

- under 16 years old,
- vulnerable adults,
- the study will take place in a school.

Please attach a photocopy of the required disclosures to this application which will be seen by the ethics committee.N/A

Notes for Guidance for completion of ethical review form and FAQs

What sort of work requires university ethical approval?

The ethics committee does periodically review all university work but on the basis of recent and previous discussions and investigations, the committee believes that all business, teaching and administration across the university is conducted within this university's ethical code of practice. Therefore, the committee concentrates its attention on areas of potential higher risk of un-ethical practice which includes the following activities which should be submitted to the committee for review namely:

- Research with human participants,
- Research involving human tissues, organs cells or other body material,
- Research involving genetic modification of cells,
- Any other activity referred to the Committee with significant ethical risk.

Questionnaires, Interviews, discussion groups, workshops.

The university ethics committee expects that research using questionnaires, interviews, discussion groups, workshops or any other discussion or questioning forum that falls under this general area will be conducted to the standards expected by the relevant professional body. Under these circumstances in which the persons being questioned are fully consenting, healthy adults and the Chief Investigator judges that the questions are 'Politically Correct' and have very low ethical & moral risk, then the Chief Investigator may proceed without needing review by the university ethics committee. **However, if any of the persons being questioned are: children, vulnerable adults or are clearly 'significantly ill' (*) then the ethics committee will require to review the research proposal which must submit the structured questions or interview theme.**

*** significantly ill. - Common sense definition eg. hospital patients.**

Who should apply for ethics approval ?

The applicant should be the Chief Investigator of the study. They should normally be a permanent employee of the University. In the case of student projects, the supervisor not the student should apply.

What documents are also required with the ethics application form ?

The following documents are required to be submitted with the application form:

a) Information Sheet.

Potential participants in your study must be given sufficient information to allow them to decide whether or not they want to take part in your project. The minimal information that

must be given to each participant in writing is called an 'Information Sheet'. The format of this type of sheet can be found on the ethics website. Please note you are advised to use slightly different Information Sheets, depending on whether your study is a student project or not.

b) Written Consent Form

Once participants have been properly informed about the study – from an 'Information Sheet', the participants should give you written consent to participate. The format of this type Consent Form can be found on the ethics website.

c) Risk-Assessment Form

Some research has associated significant health & safety risks. If your work does, then you will also be required to complete a Risk-assessment form which must be attached to your application. The Risk Assessment Form can be obtained from your School Health, Safety & Environment Manager.

d) Enhanced Criminal Disclosure Form

If your work will have participants who are under 16 years old or are 'vulnerable adults' all workers on the project will be required to undertake an enhanced criminal disclosure. The disclosures must then be attached to the ethics application. An enhanced Criminal Disclosure can be requested from Student Admissions (for students) and Human Resources (for staff).

Does your project require additional ethical approval from an external ethics committee ?

Some research in the university will require additional approval from an external ethics committee. The application procedure is that the applicant should submit their application to the university ethics committee first, and they will decide if review is also required by an external ethics committee. The two most used external ethics committees are 1) The NHS and 2) Health & Social Care. Indicator criteria to help decide if your application is likely to require additional ethics approval from these organisations are outlined below:

NHS (NRES)

Any research involving any of the following categories will require prior approval from an NHS Research Ethics Committee (NRES) before the university will approve the application;

- 1) Use of medical records. (Caldicott Approval is required).
- 2) Patients of the NHS #
- 3) Access to NHS data, organs or any other bodily materials or fluid
- 4) Foetal material
- 5) Recently dead in NHS premises
- 6) Use of NHS premises or facilities
- 7) NHS staff
- 8) Procedures which give substances to subjects,

- 9) Procedures that involve taking bio samples from subjects,
- 10) Any invasive procedure,

As a general rule: the most important criteria in determining whether or not ethical review by an NHS ethics committee is required, is whether or not the participants are being directly recruited through the NHS. For example, if a researcher wished to recruit patients with asthma by obtaining participants from NHS Trust records or GP practices, then full NHS ethical review is required. If, however, the asthmatic participants were recruited privately, or from a self-help group or via a newspaper ad, then NHS / NRES approval would not be required – only university ethics approval. For further information see:

<http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/>

Health & Social Care

New arrangements regarding the ethics committee review of multi-centre health research took effect from 1 July 1997. The new system will apply to all multi-centre research in the NHS and will cover the whole United Kingdom. A network of Multi-centre Research Ethics Committees (MRECs) is to be set up. An MREC will be established in each English region plus one each in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Local Research Ethics Committees (LRECs) will retain responsibility for decisions which affect their local populations. This publication sets out the new arrangements for ethics committee review of multi-centre research. For further information see:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Healthandsocialcaretopics/index.htm>

What do I do with the completed ethics application form ?

Your completed application form should be submitted to the secretary of the university ethics committee both in electronic form and hard copy by post. The University Ethics Committee meeting dates are listed on the ethics website.

Further information is available on the website :

<http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/research/governance/>

Appendix 4 –Draft of online questionnaire

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: How help-seeking information is understood by the general public.

This survey is part of a PhD study which is exploring the knowledge people have on help seeking intervention in relation to domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a very common problem in relationships and families but often people do not recognise it when it is happening to them or someone they know and/or do not know what to do about it or where to get help. This survey is an attempt to understand why this is and you do not have to have experienced domestic violence to take part in this survey. The questions ask you about what you understand by domestic violence and what you know about where to go for help, whether you have ever experienced it, what if anything you have done to get help with it. The survey is anonymous but there is an opportunity at the end for you to volunteer to take part in an interview to explore your opinions and/or experiences in more depth. You do not have to take part in the interviews if you complete the questionnaire.

The study has been given approval by the University of Sunderland Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about this study please contact Angela.wilcock@sunderland.ac.uk . If you have any concerns about this questionnaire please contact Catherine.donovan@sunderland.ac.uk.

Section 1 – About You

1.1 Your Age:

16-19 20-24 25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 55-59 60-64 65-69 over 70 (answer boxes will be added)

1.2 Your Gender:

Female Male Trans gender

1.3 Your Ethnicity:

White Mixed Heritage Asian/Asian British Black/Black British Chinese

Other Ethnic Background_____

1.4 What is your religious background _____

1.5 Do you have a religious identity If so what? _____

1.6 Do you practice your faith Yes No

1.7 Your Sexuality :

Heterosexual Bisexual Lesbian Gay Man Other_____

1.8 Income

Under 10,000 11-20,000 21-30,000 31-40,000 41-50,000 51-60,000 over 60,000

1.9 Accommodation:

Private Owned

Private Rented

Council Housing/Housing Association

Parents

Student Accomodation

Other _____

1.10 Do you have or parent children?

Yes

NO

If yes, What is your relationship to them _____

Do they live with you full time?

Yes (all Children)

Yes (Some Children)

No

Section 2 - Relationships

2.1 Are You?

Co-Habiting

Married

Civil Partnership

Dating

Separated

Divorced

Single

2.2 Are you currently in a relationship?

Yes

No

2.3 How long have you been in your current or last relationship?

<less than 1year

1-5 years

6-10years

11-15years

16-20 years

>over 20 years

Section 3 - Definition

3.1 What do you think domestic violence is?

3.2 From the behaviours listed below would you recognise any as being an act of domestic violence?

Behaviour	Sometimes?	Yes	NO
Financial - money withheld, spending monitored, given money as needed.			
Emotional – isolation, called names, criticised, blamed, told how to behave, told worthless, useless.			
Sexual – Rape, sexual assault, forced sex, touched, threatened with sexual assault, coerced into sex, duty to have sex to keep the peace.			
Physical – hit, punched, slapped, kicked, threatened, held down, restrained, choked, stalked, bitten, burned.			

3.3 Do you consider any of the behaviours listed as being a crime? Yes No

3.4 If yes, which?

Behaviour	Some	All	None
Financial			
Emotional			
Sexual			
Physical			

3.4 Have you recently seen for example, a leaflet, poster, sticker, television programme, advertisement or magazine article highlighting domestic violence?

Yes No Not Sure

3.5 If yes, what? _____

Section 4 – Your Experiences

4.0 Have you or anyone you know experienced any of the following?

Financial Behaviour	Yes	NO
Money Controlled		
Income Withheld		
Spending Monitored		
Given money as needed		

Emotional Behaviour	Yes	No
Being isolated from family/friends		
Regularly insulted or put down		
Constantly criticised		
Told you are worthless/useless		
Told you are a terrible wife/mother/husband/father		
Blamed when things go wrong even when it is clearly not your fault		
Threats to harm someone close to you		
Told how to dress or do your hair		
Your property damaged or withheld		
Threats to harm you		
Malicious or nuisance phone calls		
If you have children		
Threats against them		
Threats of losing your children		
Threats of preventing you seeing them		
Your children hurt		

Sexual Behaviour	Yes	No
Threatened with sexual abuse		
Sexual assault		

Raped		
Touched		
Coerced into sex		
Had sex to keep the peace		
Forced sex		

Physical Behaviour	Yes	No
Physically threatened		
Slapped/ pushed/shoved		
Kicked or punched		
Bitten		
Burned		
Held down/ restrained/ tied up		
Choked/strangled/suffocated		
Hit with an object or weapon		
Threatened with an object or weapon		
Prevented from getting help for injuries		
Stalked or followed by a partner		
Locked in a house or room by partner		

4.1 If yes, did you recognise that you were/ that the person was experiencing domestic violence?

Yes No Wasn't Sure

(If no move to section 5 on page x)

4.2 Did you speak to or confide in anyone regarding the behaviour?

Yes No (if no move on to question 4.7)

4.3 If yes, (Friend, relative etc) _____

4.4 Did the person you spoke to identify the behaviour as domestic violence?

Yes No

4.5 What advice were you offered by the person you spoke to?

4.6 Was it useful? Yes No

4.7 If you did not speak to anyone regarding the behaviour why? Tick which ever relevant

Private matter/ nobody else's business	
Didn't think I would be believed	
Thought too trivial	
Feared may get worse	
Didn't think they would help	
May not be taken seriously	
Too humiliating	
previous bad response	

other reason please state _____

Section 5 – Seeking Help

5.0 If you or someone you know experienced domestic violence who would you approach firstly for advice or/and support?

Relative Friend Colleague Neighbour Police Support Agency Doctor

Other _____ None

5.1 At what point do you think help outside the family may be needed? (More than one can be ticked)

Immediately	
If happens again	
Injury	
Serious Assault	
Children involved	
Threats of violence	

Think may be at risk	
Never	

Other reason please explain _____

5.2 If never Why?

Private matter	
don't think anyone can help	
Make situation worse	
Humiliation Stigma/Embarrassment	
Fear	
Probably not understand	
Because of sexuality	

Other reason please explain _____

5.3 If help from outside the family was needed in relation to any of the behaviours listed, would you know who your local support agencies are? (If No move to question 5.6)

Yes No

5.4 If yes who might you think of to call (please list)

Do you know how to contact them?

Yes No

5.4 Have you contacted or used any local or national support agencies in relation to domestic violence?

Yes No

5.5 Was the advice or support offered?

Useful	adequate	excellent	improved situation
Not helpful	inadequate	bad response	felt not taken seriously

**5.6 Which of the following would you consider approaching for advice/support in relation to domestic violence?
Please put them in the order in which you would approach them for help commencing with number one, or if you
would never approach use N/A**

Relatives	Friends	Colleagues	neighbours	Health Worker	Social Services
Police	Legal advice	Local community advice centre		Benefit agency	Counsellor
Specialist voluntary agency		Housing Department	Doctor/GP	Religious leader	Community Leader
Victim Support	None	Other _____			

Section 6 – Your Opinions

6.0 Do you think there are enough services to support people experiencing domestic violence?

Yes No don't know not sure

6.1 What do you think would be an effective way of supporting people experiencing domestic violence?

6.2 Do you think that all behaviour linked to the term domestic violence is adequately publicised by agencies and the media within the community?

Yes No Not enough Too much

6.3 What would you suggest as an effective way of raising awareness in society to the behaviour associated with domestic violence?

Further request for help

Thank you sincerely for taking part in this survey. I would also like to conduct one to one interviews with people who have answered the questionnaire regardless of experiences. Interviews will take place in early spring 2010 and will take no more than an hour to complete. If you would be willing to take part in an interview in which you will remain anonymous please let me know how I can contact you. Your contact details will remain confidential only being seen by myself. (Please advice of the best time and way to contact you)

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

How and when to contact you: _____

This is a template of the questions to be asked on the online survey subject to pilot. Once live the layout will differ as it will be adapted to allow online completion.

Appendix 5 - Interview Pilot Questions

Questions for one to one interview

1. Please can you tell me what you understand domestic violence to be?
2. Have you or anyone you know experienced domestic violence?
3. If yes follow up; support networks, which were approached initially?
Why that person/agency?

Did you/person know where to get advice and support or was it difficult getting the information?

If no, why, what prevented help being sought?

4. If you or anyone you know experienced domestic violence who would you approach or ask for advice and support?
If help or advice from outside the family was needed would you know how to find it or how to contact them?

5. Please can you tell me what voluntary or statutory agencies respond to domestic violence in the area or nationally?

6. Could you tell me if you have seen or read recently any leaflets, posters, or anything else sign posting help and support in response to domestic violence?

Appendix 6 – Information Sheet

Research Information Sheet

Domestic Violence: An exploration of how help seeking intervention information is understood by the general public.

I am a PhD research student studying at the University of Sunderland and would like to invite you to take part in this research study. Before committing yourself to participating in this project it is important that you understand what the research is about and what you are asked to do. Please read and consider the following information and do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that you are unsure about.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any point without explanation.

Participation in this part of the study involves an interview, which will take place at a time and place convenient you. The interview will last for about 60 minutes. The questions to be explored will be in relation to domestic violence and help seeking interventions. What I am interested in exploring is whether people know who they can go to if/when they experience any effects of domestic violence. All the information given will be recorded via a Dictaphone if you are comfortable with this, alternately hand written notes can be taken though this may mean the interview could run beyond the 60 minutes. You will also be given a sheet with a list of agencies who provide support in this area.

As a participant your identity will remain anonymous. You will be given a research name and any identifiable information will be anonymised. However; the data provided by you will be written up and printed in a thesis some of which may be published in academic literature.

Contact: If you would like any further information regarding the study, or should you wish to withdraw from the research at any time you can do so by contacting me, Angela Wilcock, on 0191 515 2562/ angela.wilcock@sunderland.ac.uk. Alternatively if you are unhappy with the way in which the study has been conducted you can contact Dr R. Pullen, Chair of the Ethics Committee of the University of Sunderland on 0191 515 2069/ Robert.pullen@sunderland.ac.uk and/or Dr Catherine Donovan, my Director of Studies on 0191 515 3218/ catherine.donovan@sunderland.ac.uk.

The University of Sunderland Ethics Committee has approved this research study

I would like to thank you sincerely for your co-operation.

Angie Wilcock

Appendix 7 – Consent Form



**University of
Sunderland**

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Study Title:.....

.....

.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

I give consent for myself / child to be a participant in this study. I have been fully informed what participation will involve and had all my questions answered. I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without giving reason and without penalty.

* I also give consent for recordings to be made relating to my participation.

I also give consent for my personal data to be used by the research workers in any way they wish and passed to anyone they wish.

Date.....

Signed.....

Participant

Note:

Participant address should only be obtained if necessary.

* Separate consent should be obtained for electronic recordings to be taken of participants.

Separate consent may also be required for research workers to distribute participant personal data.

This study is approved by the University of Sunderland Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 8 – Problem Solving and Understanding Help-Seeking

Problem Solving within families/relationships: Understanding help-seeking intervention

Section 1 – About You

1.1 Your Age:

16-19 20-24 25-29 30-34 35-39 etc. Up to over 70.

1.2 Your Gender:

Female Male Trans gender

1.3 Your Ethnicity:

White Mixed Race Asian/Asian British Black/Black British Chinese

Other _____

1.4 Your Religion (Please state what religion you are if any) _____

1.5 Do you practice your Faith? Yes No

1.6 Your Sexuality :

Heterosexual Bisexual Lesbian Homosexual Other _____

1.7 Income

Under 10,000 11-20,000 etc until + 60,000

1.8 Accommodation:

Private Owned Private Rented

Council Housing/Housing Association Parents

Student Accomodation Other _____

1.9 Do you parent Children? Yes NO

Do they live with you either full or part time? Yes (all Children) Yes (Some Children) No

Section 2 - Relationships

2.1 Are You?

Co-Habiting Married Civil Partnership Dating Separated Divorced Single

2.2 How long in your current or last relationship?

<1year 1-5 years 6-10years 11-15years 16-20 years >20 years

2.3 Who normally makes decisions in relation to the household? _____

(Or should I list, yourself, partner, joint, family etc.)

2.4 Do you and your partner ever disagree over any household decisions made? Yes No

2.5 If so how are they resolved?

Discussion one or the other accepts the decision to keep the peace Argument unresolved

Family help wider family friends Other-----

Section 3 – Problem Solving

3.1. Have you or anyone you know ever had a disagreement over?

Money Solving Debt Children Socialising Friends Family
Home Health

3.2. How was the disagreement solved?

Together Family friends Colleague Gave in to keep the peace Unresolved

Other_____

3.3 When do you think there comes a point when you need help from outside the family?

3.4 If you or anyone you knew needed help in problem solving within your immediate family who would you initially ask for advice and support?

Wider family Friends Colleagues Doctor Place of Worship Health Visitor Social
Worker Solicitor Police Voluntary Agency Local Council Advice Bureau Housing
Officer

3.5 If external advice was needed would you know how to contact the relevant agency?

Yes No

3.6 Who would you recommend to a friend, relative or colleague if they asked you for advice

3.7 Have you ever done anything to your family that you are ashamed of?

3.8 If Yes did you talk to anyone about it, If so whom?

Section Four - Behaviour

4.1 Have you or anyone you know experienced any of the following?

Financial Behaviour	Yes	<i>NO</i>
Money Controlled		
Income Withheld		
Spending Monitored		
Given money as needed		
Told how to spend your own money		

Emotional Behaviour	Yes	No
Being isolated from family		
Being isolated from friends		
Regularly insulted or put down		
Called names		
Constantly criticised		
Told you are worthless/useless		
Terrible wife/mother/husband/father		
Blamed when things go wrong		
Threats to harm someone close to you		
Told how to dress or do your hair		
Your property damaged or with held		
Made to do most or all the housework		
Threats to harm you		
Malicious or nuisance phone calls		
Medication withheld		
If you have children		
Threats against them		
Threats of losing your children		
Threats of preventing you seeing them		
Your children hurt		

Sexual Behaviour	Yes	No
Threatened with sexual abuse		
Sexual assault		
Raped		
Touched		
Had sex to keep the peace		
Duty to have sex		

Physical Behaviour Have you experienced any of the following?	Yes	No
Physically threatened		
Slapped/ pushed/shoved		
Kicked or punched		
Bitten		
Burned		
Held down/ restrained/ tied up		
Choked/strangled/suffocated		
Hit with an object or weapon		
Threatened with an object or weapon		
Prevented from getting help for injuries		
Stalked or followed by a partner		

4.2 If yes, Did you seek advice or support from anyone?

4.3 What impact did the behaviour have on you?

4.4 Do you consider any of the behaviours listed as being a crime? Yes No

4.5 If yes, Which?

All Financial Emotional Sexual Physical

4.6 If you experienced of the listed behaviours would you consider yourself or other person to be experiencing domestic violence?

Yes No

4.7 If yes, Which behaviours?

Financial Emotional Sexual Physical

Section Five – Help Seeking

5.1 If help from outside the family in relation to the behaviours listed would you know who your local support agencies are?

Yes No

and how to contact them?

Yes No

5.2 If yes, Have you used any?

5.3 If yes what support did the agency/agencies offer?

5.4 Which of the following would you consider approaching for support?

Relatives	Friends	Colleagues	neighbours	Health Worker	Social Services
Police	Legal advice	Local community advice centre	Benefit agency	Counsellor	
Specialist voluntary agency	Housing Department	Doctor/GP	Religious leader	Community Leader	
Victim Support	None	Other			

5.5 Do you think any family/relationship problems should be kept within the family if possible rather than involving outside help?

Yes No

5.6 If you think Yes tick any you think may apply

Private matter/ no one else's business	Too trivial/ not worth bothering anyone
Don't think they could help	Because of your sexuality
May make situation worse	Probably not understand
Humiliated	Stigma/embarrassment
Other reason	Fear

Further request for help

Thank you very much for taking part in this survey. I would also like to conduct one to one interviews with people who have answered the questionnaire regardless of experiences. Interviews will take place _____ and will take no more than an hour to complete. If you would be willing to take part in an interview of which you will remain anonymous please let me know how I can contact you, your contact details will remain confidential only being seen by myself. (Please advise of the best time to contact you)

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Appendix 9 – Online Survey

Domestic Violence: Would you know where to get help?

This survey is part of a PhD study which is exploring the knowledge people have on help seeking interventions in relation to domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a very common problem in relationships and families but often people do not recognise it when it is happening to them or someone they know and/or do not know what to do about it or where to get help. This survey is an attempt to understand why this is and you do not have to have experienced domestic violence to take part in this survey. The questions ask you about what you understand by domestic violence and what you know about where to go for help if you or someone you know did or has experienced domestic violence. The survey is anonymous but there is an opportunity at the end for you to volunteer to take part in an interview to explore your opinions and/or experiences in more depth. You do not have to take part in the interviews if you complete the questionnaire.


The study has been given approval by the University of Sunderland Ethics Committee. If you have any questions about this study please contact Angela.wilcock@sunderland.ac.uk . If you have any concerns about this questionnaire please contact Catherine.donovan@sunderland.ac.uk

To complete the survey drop down lists, text boxes and radio buttons are offered enabling you to answer each question.

Section 1 - About You

1.	Your age:	No response ▼
2.	Your gender:	No response ▼
3.	Your ethnicity:	No response ▼ <input type="text"/>
4.	What is your religious background?	<input type="text"/>
5.	Do you practice your faith?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6.	Is English your first language?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7.	Your Sexuality:	No response ▼ <input type="text"/>

8.	Are you in paid employment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8a.	If 'Yes', do you work	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time
9.	Household income:	No response ▼
10.	What is your highest qualification?	No response ▼ <input type="text"/>
11.	Accommodation:	No response ▼ <input type="text"/>
12.	Do you parent children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
12a.	Do they live with you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
Section 2 - Relationships		
13.	Are you currently in a relationship?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
14.	Are you:	No response ▼
15.	How long have you been in your current or last relationship?	No response ▼
Section 3 - Definition		

16.	What do you think domestic violence is?			
17.	From the behaviours listed below do you recognise any of them as being an act of domestic violence?			
	Financial Behaviour	Yes	No	Not sure
	Having your money controlled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Income withheld	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Spending monitored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Only being given money when your partner decides you need it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Emotional Behaviour	Yes	No	Not sure
	Being isolated from family/friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being regularly insulted or put down	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being constantly criticised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being told you are worthless/useless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being told you are a terrible partner/wife/mother/husband/father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being blamed when things go wrong even when it is clearly not your fault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Having threats to harm someone close to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Having threats to harm you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Having your property damaged or with held	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being told how to dress or do your hair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Having malicious or nuisance phone calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Emotional Behaviour aimed at children	Yes	No	Not sure
	Having threats against them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being threatened with losing your children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Having threats to prevent you seeing them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Having your children hurt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sexual Behaviour	Yes	No	Not sure
	Being threatened with sexual abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Experiencing sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Being raped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Being touched sexually in ways that make you fearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being coerced into group sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being coerced into sex when you really don't want to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have sex to keep the peace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being forced to watch pornography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Behaviour	Yes	No	Not sure
Being physically threatened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being slapped/pushed/shoved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being kicked or punched	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being bitten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being burned	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being stabbed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being held down/restrained/tied up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being choked/strangled/suffocated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being hit with an object or weapon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being threatened with an object or weapon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being prevented from getting help for injuries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being stalked or followed by a partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being stalked or followed by an ex-partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being locked in a house or room by partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Do you consider ANY of the (financial, emotional, sexual or physical) behaviours listed as being a crime?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
18a. If 'Yes', which?			
Behaviour	Some	All	None
Financial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 4 - Seeking Help			

19.	If help from outside the family was needed in relation to any of the behaviours listed, would you know who your local support agencies are? (If 'No', move to question 22)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
20.	If 'Yes', who might you think to call? (Please list)	<div></div>
21.	Do you know how to contact them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
22.	Which of the following would you consider approaching for advice/support in relation to domestic violence? (Please put them in order in which you would approach them for help commencing with number 1)	<div> <input type="checkbox"/> Relatives </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Friends </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbours </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Health Worker </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Police </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Legal advice </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Local community advice centre </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Benefit agency </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Counsellor </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist voluntary agency </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Department </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor/GP </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Religious leader </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Community Leader </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Victim Support </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> None </div>

		Other reason
23.	Most people say that they would talk to their family and/or friends first if they were experiencing domestic violence. Do you agree with this?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No - Please go to Q24
24.	If 'No', I am interested in knowing more about why people may or may not seek help for domestic violence. If you would not speak to your family/friends about this could you look at the following list of reasons why not and tick all that are relevant:	<input type="checkbox"/> It's a private matter/nobody else's business <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that I wouldn't be believed <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that it might be thought too trivial <input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it may get worse if I tell somebody <input type="checkbox"/> I don't think others can help with problems like domestic violence <input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it would not be taken seriously <input type="checkbox"/> I would be too ashamed/humiliated <input type="checkbox"/> I would not want to involve my family/friends <input type="checkbox"/> I've heard that you don't get a good response from family/friends Other reason
25.	Do you think you would find it easier to speak to the police?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No - Please go to Q26
26.	If 'No', please could you look at the following list and say why you would not speak to the police:	<input type="checkbox"/> It's a private matter/nobody else's business <input type="checkbox"/> I would be too ashamed/humiliated <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that I wouldn't be believed <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that it might be thought too trivial

		<input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it may get worse if I tell somebody <input type="checkbox"/> I don't think others can help with problems like domestic violence <input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it would not be taken seriously <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry I was wasting their time <input type="checkbox"/> I would not want to involve the police <input type="checkbox"/> I don't think they deal with domestic disputes <input type="checkbox"/> I've heard that you don't get a good response from the police <input type="text"/> Other reason
27.	Would you approach domestic violence agencies? <i>e.g. Wearside Women In Need</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No - Please go to Q28
28.	If 'No', could you look at the following list of reasons why not and select all that are relevant:	<input type="checkbox"/> It's a private matter/nobody else's business <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that I wouldn't be believed <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that it might be thought too trivial <input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it may get worse if I tell somebody <input type="checkbox"/> I don't think others can help with problems like domestic violence <input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it would not be taken seriously <input type="checkbox"/> I would be too ashamed/humiliated <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry I was wasting their time <input type="checkbox"/> I would not know how to contact or find them <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry I had to pay for

		services <input type="checkbox"/> I would not want to involve agencies at all <input type="checkbox"/> I've heard that you don't get a good response from domestic violence agencies
29.	Would you prefer to approach more formal agencies such as a health visitor or your GP?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No - Please go to Q30
30.	If 'No', look at the following list of reasons why not and select all that are relevant:	<input type="checkbox"/> It's a private matter/nobody else's business <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that I wouldn't be believed <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that it might be thought too trivial <input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it may get worse if I tell somebody <input type="checkbox"/> I don't think others can help with problems like domestic violence <input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it would not be taken seriously <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry I may be wasting their time <input type="checkbox"/> I would be too ashamed/humiliated <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that they may tell or involve someone else <input type="checkbox"/> I don't think they would be interested in my problems <input type="checkbox"/> I would not want to involve anyone else <input type="text"/> Other reason
31.	Would you speak to someone more informal like a work colleagues, religious leader?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No - Please go to Q32

32.	<p>If 'No', look at the following list of reasons why not and select all that are relevant:</p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> It's a private matter/nobody else's business</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that I wouldn't be believed</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that it might be thought too trivial</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it may get worse if I tell somebody</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I don't think others can help with problems like domestic violence</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it would not be taken seriously</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would worry I may be wasting their time</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would be too ashamed/humiliated</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that they may tell or involve someone else</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I don't think they would be interested in my problems</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would not want to involve anyone else</div> <div><input type="text"/> Other reason</div>
33.	<p>If you would not speak to anyone regarding experiences of domestic violence would you select the reasons as to why not that from the following list?</p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> It's a private matter/nobody else's business</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that I wouldn't be believed</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that it might be thought too trivial</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would worry I was wasting their time</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it may get worse if I tell somebody</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> I don't think others can help with problems like domestic violence</div>

		<input type="checkbox"/> I would not want to involve anyone else <input type="checkbox"/> I would fear it would not be taken seriously <input type="checkbox"/> I would be too ashamed/humiliated <input type="checkbox"/> I don't think they would be interested in my problems <input type="checkbox"/> I would be frightened about what would happen when it all came out <input type="checkbox"/> I would be too worried in case I lost everything <input type="checkbox"/> I would worry that they may tell or involve someone else <input type="checkbox"/> I've heard that you don't get a good response from people <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to be judged or labelled as a 'victim'
34.	At what point do you think help outside the family may be needed? (More than one can be selected)	<input type="checkbox"/> Immediately <input type="checkbox"/> If it happened more than once <input type="checkbox"/> If I was injured <input type="checkbox"/> If it was a serious assault <input type="checkbox"/> If the children were involved <input type="checkbox"/> If there were threats of violence <input type="checkbox"/> If I thought I was at risk/in fear of my life <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="text"/> Other reason
35.	Have you recently seen for example, a leaflet, poster, sticker, television programme, advertisement or magazine article highlighting help for domestic violence?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

36.	If 'Yes', what?	
-----	-----------------	--

Section 5 - Your Opinions

37.	Do you think there are enough services to support people experiencing domestic violence?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
-----	--	---

38.	What do you think would be an effective way of supporting people experiencing domestic violence?	
-----	--	--


39.	Do you think that the general public receive enough information about all behaviours associated with domestic violence?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough <input type="checkbox"/> Too much
-----	---	---

40.	What would you suggest as an effective way of raising awareness in society about the behaviours associated with domestic violence?	
-----	--	--

Further request for help

Thank you sincerely for taking part in this survey. I would also like to conduct one to one interviews with people who have answered the questionnaire. In these interviews I want to explore help-seeking in more detail and your opinions about whether and when people seek help for domestic violence regardless of your actual experiences. Interviews will take place in early spring 2010 and will take no more than an hour to complete. If you would be willing to take part in an interview in which you will remain anonymous please let me know how I can contact you. Your contact details will remain confidential, only being seen by myself. (Please advise of the best time and way to contact you)

Name:	
-------	--

Address:		
Telephone number	<input type="text"/>	
Email	<input type="text"/>	
How and when to contact you:	<input type="text"/>	
Further request for help		
National Domestic Violence Freephone helpline (24hrs) 0808 2000 247 Support for anyone experiencing domestic violence	Wearside Women In Need Sunderland 0800 066 5555 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline	
Women's Aid Federation of England 0808 2000 247 For women and men experiencing domestic violence	Broken Rainbow 07812 644 914 Services for LGBT people experiencing domestic violence	
Age Concern Freephone Helpline 0800 009966	The Samaritans 08457 90 90 90 Emotional support for everyone	
Victim Support 0845 3030 900 Emotional support and referral service for victims of crime	NSPCC 0808 860 5000 Advice for all young people and parents	
Rape Crises The Reach Centres Ellis Fraser Centre in Sunderland Tel: 0191 565 3725 http://www.reachcentre.org.uk/	Shelter 0844 4994717 Tyneside Housing Aid Shelter	
<p>THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY. YOUR VIEWS WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE</p> <p>Please press the "Submit Survey" button below</p>		
<input type="button" value="Submit Survey"/>		<input type="button" value="Reset"/>

Appendix 10 –Demographics

Frequency Table

If yes do you work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Full-time	101	64.3	78.3	78.3
	Part-time	28	17.8	21.7	100.0
	Total	129	82.2	100.0	
Missing	System	28	17.8		
Total		157	100.0		

Accommodation Type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Private Owned	102	65.0	70.3	70.3
	PrivateRented	17	10.8	11.7	82.1
	Council Housing/Association	7	4.5	4.8	86.9
	Parents	17	10.8	11.7	98.6
	Other	2	1.3	1.4	100.0
	Total	145	92.4	100.0	
Missing	System	12	7.6		
Total		157	100.0		

Income reduced

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	under 10,000	11	7.0	8.5	8.5
	11-20,000	20	12.7	15.5	24.0
	21-30,000	29	18.5	22.5	46.5
	over 30,000	69	43.9	53.5	100.0
	Total	129	82.2	100.0	
Missing	System	28	17.8		
Total		157	100.0		

		education			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	under	61	38.9	44.2	44.2
	higher	70	44.6	50.7	94.9
	other	7	4.5	5.1	100.0
	Total	138	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	19	12.1		
Total		157	100.0		

DISPLAY DICTIONARY.

File Information

[DataSet0]

Appendix 11 – Behaviours

Income Withheld

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	124	79.0	83.8	83.8
	no	24	15.3	16.2	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

told how to dress or do your hair

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	106	67.5	73.1	73.1
	no	32	20.4	22.1	95.2
	not sure	7	4.5	4.8	100.0
	Total	145	92.4	100.0	
Missing	System	12	7.6		
Total		157	100.0		

sex to keep the peace

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	105	66.9	70.9	70.9
	no	30	19.1	20.3	91.2
	not sure	13	8.3	8.8	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

coerced into sex when you dont want to

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	122	77.7	82.4	82.4
	no	22	14.0	14.9	97.3
	not sure	4	2.5	2.7	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

Frequencies

Statistics

		Spending Monitored	Money Controlled	Income Withheld	told how to dress or do your hair
N	Valid	148	147	148	145
	Missing	9	10	9	12
Std. Deviation		.488	.427	.370	.562
Percentiles	25	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	75	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00

Statistics

		sex to keep the peace	coerced into sex when you dont want to
N	Valid	148	148
	Missing	9	9
Std. Deviation		.643	.466
Percentiles	25	1.00	1.00
	50	1.00	1.00
	75	2.00	1.00

Frequency Table

Spending Monitored

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	91	58.0	61.5	61.5
	No	57	36.3	38.5	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

Money Controlled

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	112	71.3	76.2	76.2
	No	35	22.3	23.8	100.0
	Total	147	93.6	100.0	
Missing	System	10	6.4		
Total		157	100.0		

Appendix 12 - Crime

Frequencies

Frequency Table

If so which are a crime - Financial

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	some	74	47.1	53.6	53.6
	all	38	24.2	27.5	81.2
	none	26	16.6	18.8	100.0
	Total	138	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	19	12.1		
Total		157	100.0		

If so which are a crime - Emotional

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	some	70	44.6	50.0	50.0
	all	63	40.1	45.0	95.0
	none	7	4.5	5.0	100.0
	Total	140	89.2	100.0	
Missing	System	17	10.8		
Total		157	100.0		

If so which are a crime -Sexual

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	some	40	25.5	27.2	27.2
	all	107	68.2	72.8	100.0
	Total	147	93.6	100.0	
Missing	System	10	6.4		
Total		157	100.0		

If so which are a crime - Physical

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	some	22	14.0	15.0	15.0
	all	125	79.6	85.0	100.0
	Total	147	93.6	100.0	
Missing	System	10	6.4		
Total		157	100.0		

Appendix 13 – Help-seeking

Frequencies

Frequency Table

When may help outside family be needed- immediately

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	40	25.5	27.0	27.0
	No	108	68.8	73.0	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

happened more than once

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	65	41.4	43.9	43.9
	No	83	52.9	56.1	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

If I was injured

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	74	47.1	50.0	50.0
	No	74	47.1	50.0	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

if it was a serious assault

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	81	51.6	54.7	54.7
	No	67	42.7	45.3	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

if children were involved

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	89	56.7	60.1	60.1
	No	59	37.6	39.9	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

if there were threats of violence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	54	34.4	37.0	37.0
	No	92	58.6	63.0	100.0
	Total	146	93.0	100.0	
Missing	System	11	7.0		
Total		157	100.0		

if I thought I was at risk/in fear of life

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	100	63.7	68.0	68.0
	No	47	29.9	32.0	100.0
	Total	147	93.6	100.0	
Missing	System	10	6.4		
Total		157	100.0		

```

FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Q33i Q33k Q33o
  /NTILES=4
  /STATISTICS=STDDEV
  /ORDER=ANALYSIS.

```

Frequencies

Frequency Table

would be ashamed/humiliated

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	28	17.8	18.9	18.9
	2	120	76.4	81.1	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

be frightened what would happen when it came out

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	20	12.7	13.5	13.5
	2	128	81.5	86.5	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

I don't want to be judged or labelled a 'victim'

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	22	14.0	14.9	14.9
	2	126	80.3	85.1	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

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FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Q25 Q26c Q26g Q26i
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Frequencies

Frequency Table

would you find it easier to speak to police

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	61	38.9	42.1	42.1
	no	84	53.5	57.9	100.0
	Total	145	92.4	100.0	
Missing	System	12	7.6		
Total		157	100.0		

Would worry not believed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	34	21.7	23.0	23.0
	no	114	72.6	77.0	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

Would worry would not be taken seriously

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	27	17.2	18.2	18.2
	no	121	77.1	81.8	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

Would not want to involve police

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	26	16.6	17.6	17.6
	no	122	77.7	82.4	100.0
	Total	148	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	9	5.7		
Total		157	100.0		

Appendix 14 – Help Needed

Frequencies

Frequency Table

If help outside family needed do you know who to contact

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	87	55.4	59.2	59.2
no	60	38.2	40.8	100.0
Total	147	93.6	100.0	
Missing System	10	6.4		
Total	157	100.0		

Do you know how to contact them

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	82	52.2	78.1	78.1
no	23	14.6	21.9	100.0
Total	105	66.9	100.0	
Missing System	52	33.1		
Total	157	100.0		

```
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```

Frequencies

Frequency Table

Have you recently seen article highlighting DV

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	88	56.1	60.7	60.7
no	38	24.2	26.2	86.9
not sure	19	12.1	13.1	100.0
Total	145	92.4	100.0	
Missing System	12	7.6		
Total	157	100.0		

Do you think there are enough services for people

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	24	15.3	16.7	16.7
	no	45	28.7	31.3	47.9
	Don't know	46	29.3	31.9	79.9
	Not sure	29	18.5	20.1	100.0
	Total	144	91.7	100.0	
Missing	System	13	8.3		
Total		157	100.0		

Do you think enough information is received by general public regarding DV

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	8	5.1	5.6	5.6
	no	81	51.6	57.0	62.7
	not enough	53	33.8	37.3	100.0
	Total	142	90.4	100.0	
Missing	System	15	9.6		
Total		157	100.0		

```

FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Q40comment
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/ORDER=ANALYSIS.

```

comment data

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	challenge cultural influences	1	.6	.9	.9
	media campaigns (hard hitting)	43	27.4	40.2	41.1
	Education	17	10.8	15.9	57.0
	Don't know	3	1.9	2.8	59.8
	Talk more about the issues	2	1.3	1.9	61.7
	Magazine/newspaper campaigns	3	1.9	2.8	64.5
	Speak to survivors	1	.6	.9	65.4
	Leaflets in work places	2	1.3	1.9	67.3
	Not just physical raise awareness	9	5.7	8.4	75.7
	leaflets to all houses	2	1.3	1.9	77.6
	TV programmes/documentaries	6	3.8	5.6	83.2
	Internet	5	3.2	4.7	87.9
	Name & shame perp	3	1.9	2.8	90.7
	More public information	10	6.4	9.3	100.0
	Total	107	68.2	100.0	
Missing	Nightclubs/leisure facilities	2	1.3		
	System	48	30.6		
	Total	50	31.8		
Total		157	100.0		

Appendix 15 - Qualitative Questions

Themes and Questions for One to One Interviews

1. Background Information -

Can you tell me about your family history where you grew up, brothers and sisters?

Are you in a relationship, if so do you have any family?

What school did you go to? Did you achieve any qualifications?

Did you go onto to further you education?

Can you tell me about your employment history?

What would you say your family class is?

2. Please can you tell me what you understand domestic violence to be?

Do you think any of the behaviours you have described are crimes?

Why/Why not?

Do you think there is a difference between the ways that violence between people in a relationship and violence between strangers is seen?

Incident in the street between man & women would it be taken as seriously as two men/women etc?

In the survey behaviours that related to money were least likely to be recognised as DV, why do you think that was?

In the survey men were the least likely to say that monitoring a partner's spending or controlling your partner's money is abusive - what do you think?

Other behaviours to be least identified by participants in the survey was being told how to dress, having sex to keep the peace and pornography why do you think that might be?

3. If somebody you knew approached you because they were experiencing domestic violence what you advise them to do? –
4. If you were experiencing domestic violence would you speak to anybody?

Who would you speak to, would you contact any agency, which agency would you contact?

Family/friends, why?

What about the police? explore

other statutory agencies – explain

DV agencies – WWIN, Women's Aid, Why?

If they mention someone has follow up path to help-seeking;

What support networks, which were approached initially?

Why that person/agency? Did you/person know where to get advice and support or was it difficult getting the information?

If no, why, what prevented help being sought?

5. At what point do you think that help outside the family would be needed?

if help or advice was needed outside the family would you know how to find it

and/or how to contact them?

If not why?

Reasons?

Being Ashamed and Humiliation was a common answer in the survey for not seeking help, why do you think that is?

Why do you think there is still a silence surrounding domestic violence?

6. Please could you tell me what voluntary or statutory agencies respond to domestic violence in the area or nationally?

Do you know how to contact them?

What do you know about them?

What they do etc, what support is offered?

Do you think there are enough services?

Other research has shown that less than 24% of DV crimes are ever reported to the police or other agencies – Why do you think that is?

7. Could you tell me if you have seen or read recently any leaflets, posters, or anything else sign posting help and support in response to domestic violence?

If yes, what did they show?

Do you think there is enough information available highlighting the behaviours associated with domestic violence? And of the services available?

8. What would you say would be the best way of raising awareness of the help and support available in Sunderland?

If you had unlimited power and funds to make it easier for people/women to get help in relation to domestic violence what would they be?

9. Is there anything else you would like to say that you have not had the opportunity to say so far?

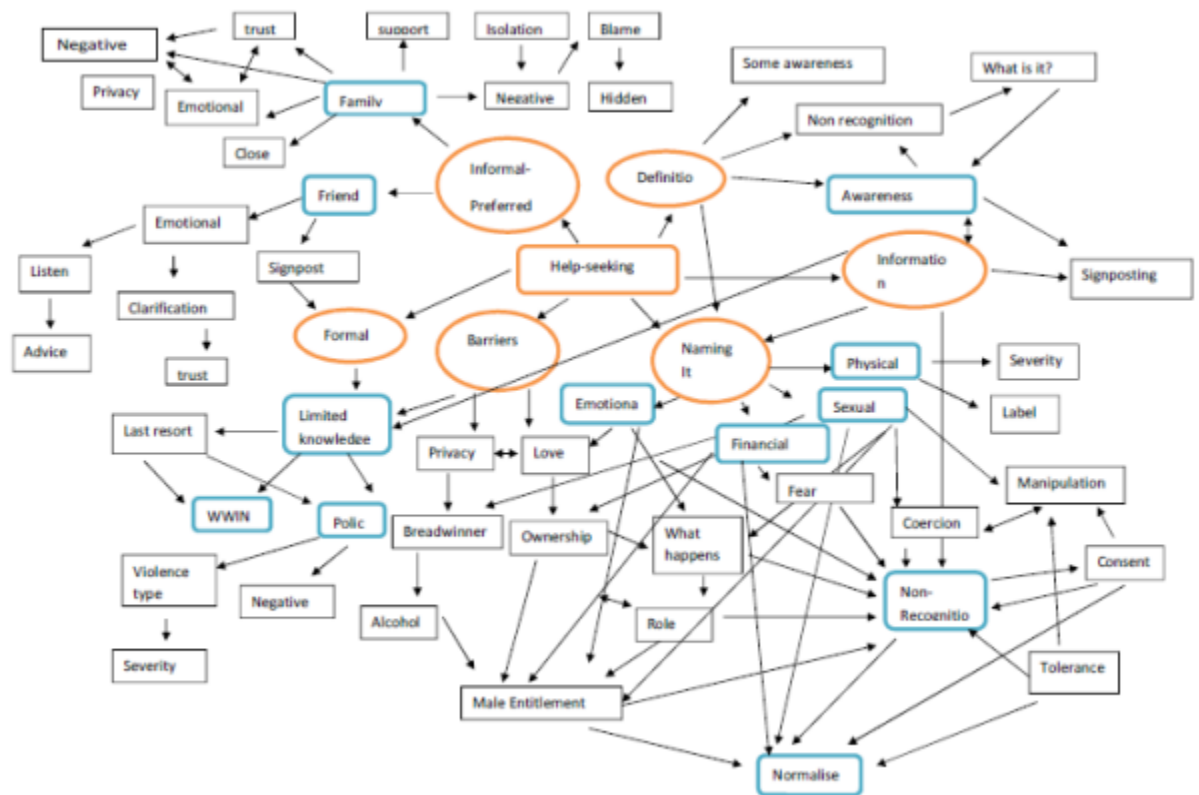
Why did you want to participate in this research?

Appendix 16 – Support Agencies Leaflet

Support Agencies

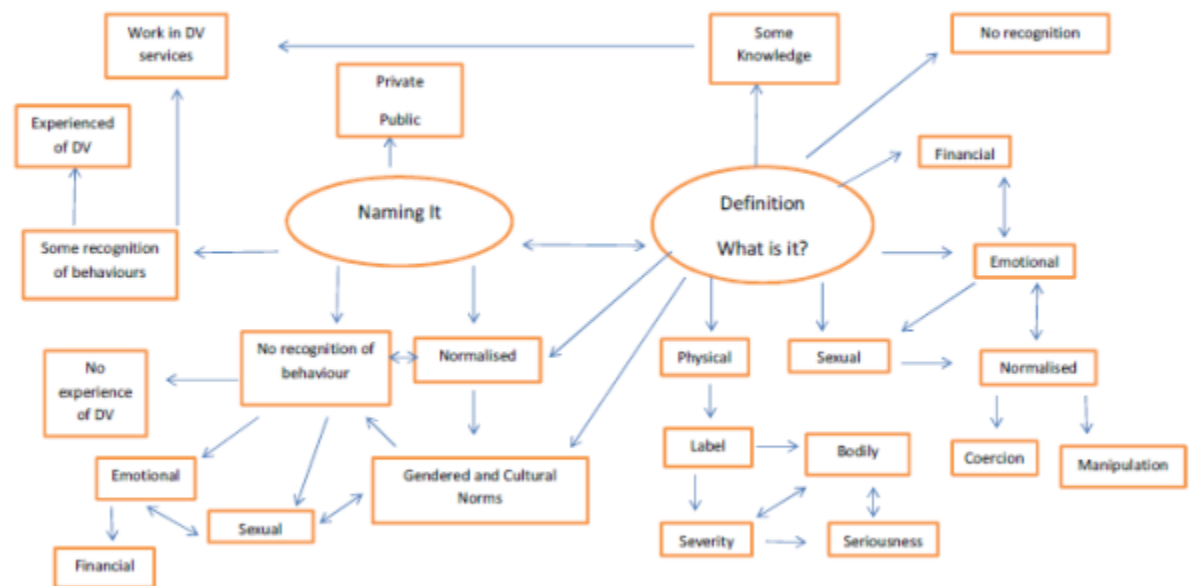
National Domestic Violence Freephone helpline (24hrs) 0808 2000 247 Support for anyone experiencing	Wearside Women In Need Sunderland 0800 066 5555 - 24 Hour Domestic Abuse Helpline
Women's Aid Federation of England 08457 023 468 www.womensaid.org.uk For women and men experiencing domestic violence	Broken Rainbow 08452 60 44 60 0300 999 LGBT (5428) - for use with mobile phones http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk/
Regard 0844 431 277 secretary@regard.org.uk For lesbians and gay men with disabilities	NSPCC 0808 860 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk Advice for all young people and
Victim Support 0845 3030 900 www.victimsupport.org.uk Emotional support and referral service for victims of crime	Shelter Tyneside Housing Aid Shelter 0191 232 3778 0808 800 4444 – National number http://england.shelter.org.uk/home
Northumbria Police 03456 043 043 Non emergency 999 Emergency http://www.northumbria.police.uk	National Centre for Domestic Violence 0844 8044 999 www.ncdv.org.uk
Action on Elder Abuse 0808 8088 141 enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk	The Samaritans 08457 90 90 90 www.samaritans.org.uk

Appendix 17 – Thematic Map 1, Initial Themes

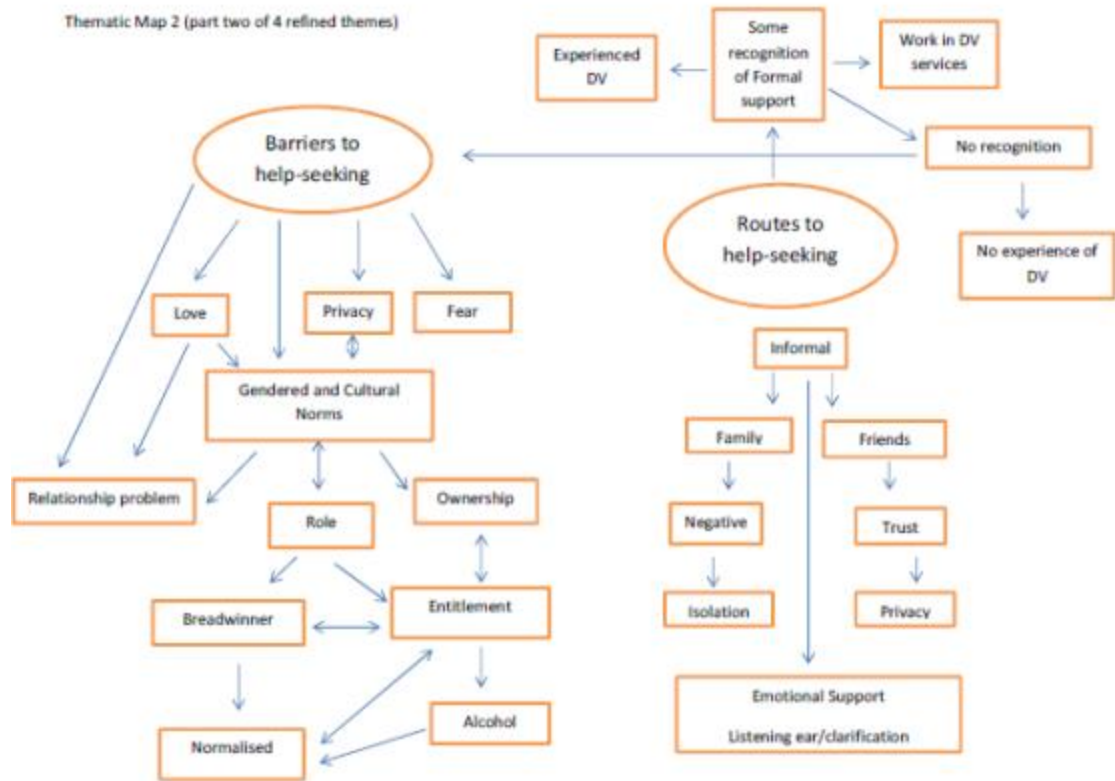


Appendix 18 – Thematic Map 2 – Refined themes

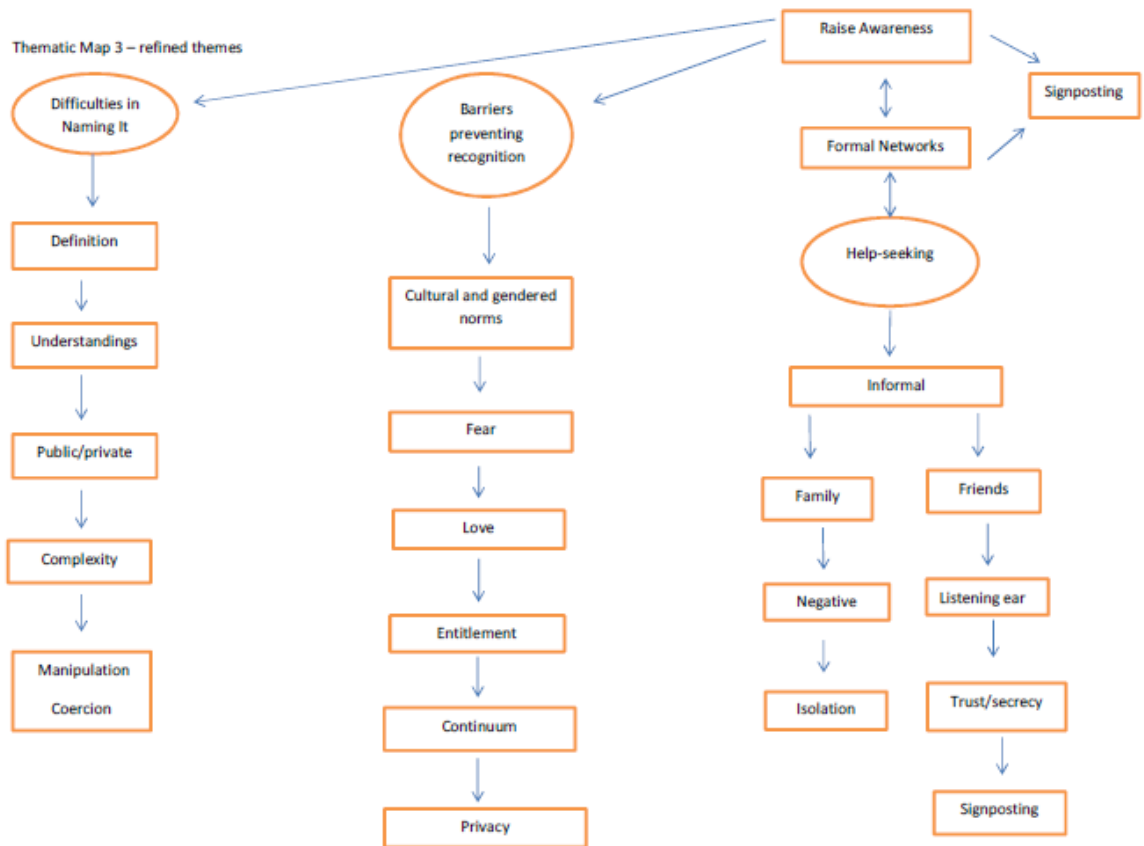
Thematic Map 2 (part one of 4 refined themes)



Thematic Map 2 (part two of 4 refined themes)



Appendix 19 –Thematic Map, Final Themes



Appendix 20 –Thematic Map, Group Types

